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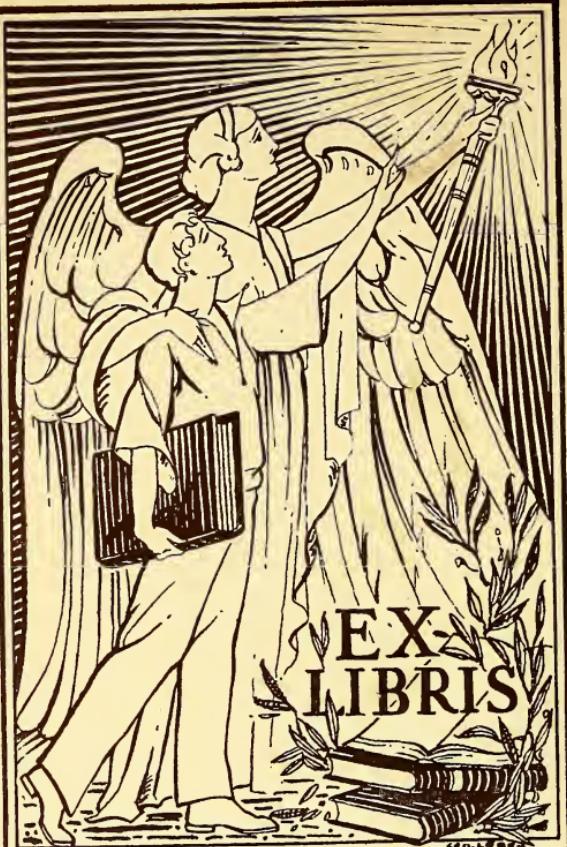
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QUINCY ADAMS SAWYER

By FREDERIC JUSTIN ADAMS



SAMUEL FRENCH, 25 West 45th St., New York



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Quincy Adams Sawyer

A COMEDY DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS

BY

FREDERIC JUSTIN ADAMS

Dramatized from C. F. Pidgin's novel of the same name

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

QUINCY ADAMS SAWYER, *leading man.*

ZEKIEL PETTENGILL, *second man.*

OBADIAH STROUT, *character man.*

ARTHUR HASTINGS, *juvenile man.*

HIRAM MAXWELL, *comedian.*

DEACON MASON, *gen. bus.*

ABNER STILES, *character comedy.*

BOB WOOD, *large man (bit).*

LINDY PUTNAM, *leading woman.*

✓ ALICE PETTENGILL, *second woman.* *blinded*

MRS. HEPSIBAH PUTNAM }
MRS. CROWLEY } *Double—character.*

HULDY MASON, *ingénue.*

SAMANTHY GREEN, *character comedienne.*

MANDY SKINNER, *ingénue.*

NOTE: *The parts of Deacon and Abner can be blended and parts of Mandy and Samanthy blended, but don't do this unless absolutely necessary.*

SCENES

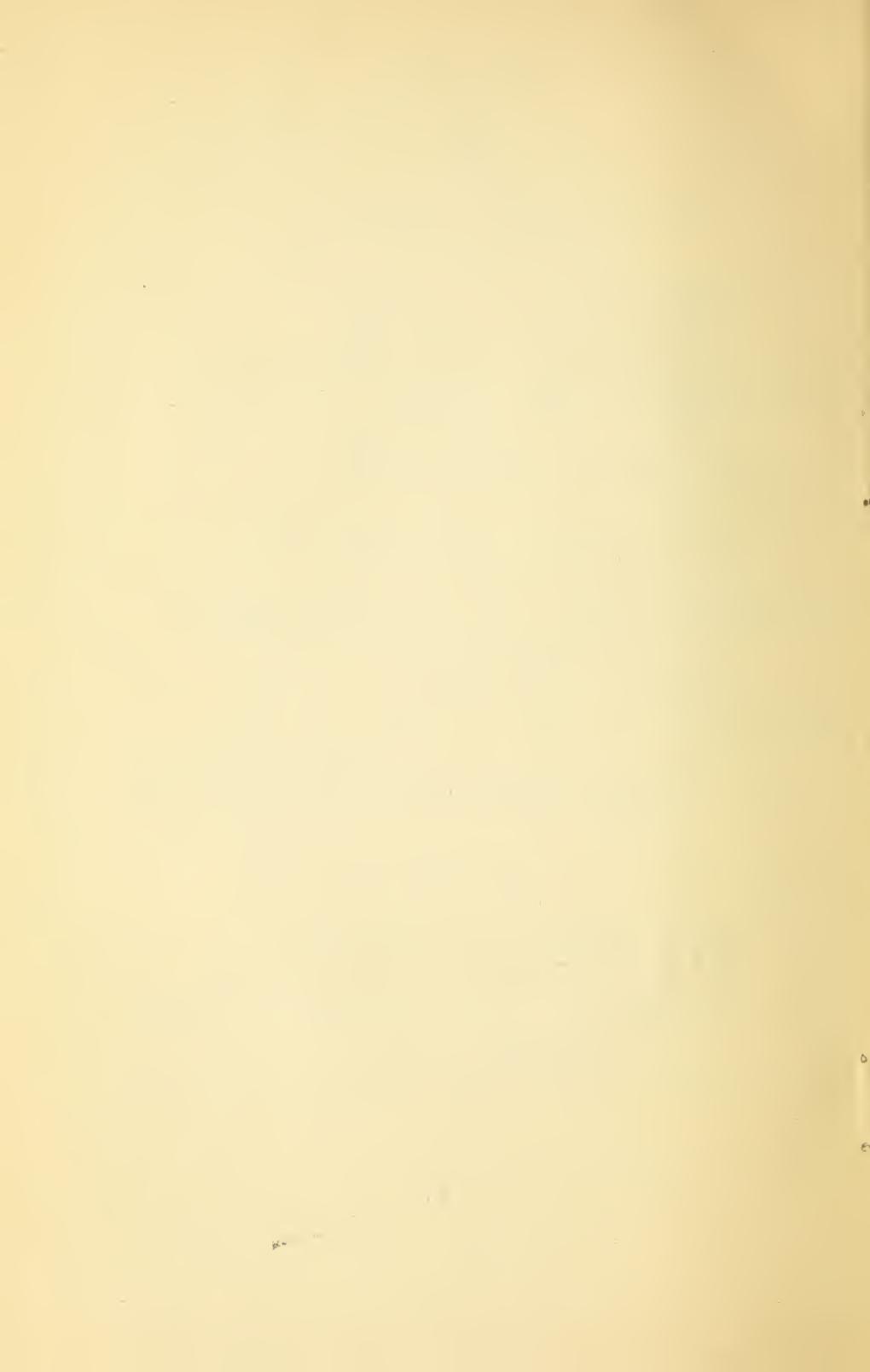
Act I: *Interior of Hill's grocery store.*

Act II: *The cross roads near Mason's corner.*

Act III: *Zeke Pettengill's farm yard.*

Act IV: *Scene I. Exterior of Zeke Pettengill's farm house.*

Scene II. Zeke Pettengill's sitting room.



Quincy Adams Sawyer

ACT I

SCENE: *Interior of Hill's grocery store. Large center door at back, through which is seen a village street. Inside the store, boxes, barrels, etc. Counter running obliquely down R. Small place partitioned off up L. for post office. Large rack on which are hung several letters. Old cylinder stove L.C. with several chairs around it. A heterogeneous mass of wares, including dry goods, boots and shoes, farming implements, etc.*

Music: "Hark and Hear the Eagle Scream."
Played through once before curtain rises.

DISCOVERED: BOB WOOD and HIRAM MAXWELL and DEACON MASON singing as the curtain goes up. The singing is discordant and jumbled, but with an attempt at harmony. OBADIAH STROUT enters C.D., attracted by the singing, pauses, smiles, recognizing his own melody, then comes down promptly.

CHORUS.

Raise your voices, swing the banners,
Pound the drums and bang pianners,
Blow the fife and shriek for freedom;
Meriky is bound to lead 'em.
Emigrate ye toiling millions!

(STROUT comes down c.)

Sile enough for tens of billions,
Land of honey, buttermilk, cream;
Hark! And hear the eagle scream.

STROUT. Stop! Stop! For Heaven's sake, stop!
(*Singers stop, holding attitudes, HIRAM eyeing STROUT askance; Wood turns a scowling look upon him.*) If I'd ever dreamp't my song was goin' to be murdered that way, I'd never have writ it. (*Turns away to counter in disgust.*)

HIRAM. Didn't you say last night at the concert that young and old were invited to jine in the chorus?

STROUT. (*Aggrieved*) Yes; in the chorus, but not in the murder of it.

DEACON. Such is the price of fame, Obadiah.

STROUT. (*Whining tone*) Fame! Such rendering as that will never make my song famous.

DEACON. No! It might make it notorious.

BOB. (*After glance at DEACON*) Well, if you can't git fame, Professor, git notoriety.

HIRAM. An' if you can't git either—git married!

(*Chuckles. STROUT getting impatient.*)

STROUT. In the fust place, you don't attact it right. A good deal depends on the start. Now—altogether! (*Gives chord which they repeat. They repeat chorus. He beats time. It is worse than before. He cries "stop!" several times, then dances in rage R. to counter, and drops in chair, disgusted.*)

(*Enter MANDY SKINNER C.D. She stops in doorway and holds her ears. One by one they see her and doff their hats; finally HIRAM is left singing alone. MANDY looks at him; he strikes a high note and opens his mouth very wide; she takes an onion out of a barrel and puts it in his mouth. All laugh loudly, then HIRAM crosses behind counter.*)

MANDY. If all home remedies have failed, why don't you go to Boston, and try a city doctor? (*Goes to counter R.*)

HIRAM. (*Going behind counter*) What a joker you are, Mandy. I believe you'll crack a joke on the minister the day you are married.

MANDY. Well, I may never get that chance. (*All laugh.*) Give me a pound of tea, same as we always have.

HIRAM. (*Preparing package*) How'd you enjoy Professor Strout's concert, Mandy?

MANDY. Oh, I enjoyed the concert—but the way Mr. Sawyer whistled "Listen to the Mocking Bird"—oh, my! (*Delighted.*)

STROUT. (*In deep disgust*) Mr. Sawyer's whistling! (*Rising, crosses to c.*) Wa'n't it a cussed shame to spile a first-class concert with that whistling?

MANDY. (*Down r.*) Why, I thought it was very kind of him to volunteer to fill the vacancy.

STROUT. He might have waited until he was asked. I guess I can run a concert with the material I have in the singing school, without calling on city chaps to help.

DEACON. He was a mighty fine whistler, though.

HIRAM. Yes! I thought he hogged the hull show.

STROUT. (*Vauntingly*) Oh, you do, eh? Then what were you singing my song fer jest now? When people go about singing a song next day after a concert, it kinder proves that song made a hit, don't it?

DEACON. (*Doubtfully*) Well, mebbe so!

STROUT. I tell you, when "The Star Spangled Banner" and "Hail Columbia" are laid on the top shelf, a hundred million people will be singing Strout's great national anthem "Hark! And Hear the Eagle Scream." What do you think of that prophecy, Miss Skinner?

MANDY. (*Taking her package*) I think if conceit were consumption, there'd be a great big mound in the cemetery, with O. Strout on the headstone. (*Dances off c.*)

(*All laugh smotheredly except HIRAM and DEACON, who laugh loudly.*)

STROUT. (*Up c., speaking off c.d.*) And if sass were butter, your folks wouldn't have to keep any cows. (*To HIRAM*) Do you know what you're laughing at?

HIRAM. Well, I guess I'm laughing at the joke she played on me when she stuffed that onion into my mouth.

STROUT. Humph! How long does it take you to see a joke?

HIRAM. Well, I heerd one t'other day and I ain't sure yet whether 'twas a joke or the truth. (*Winking at DEACON.*)

STROUT. What was it?

HIRAM. I heerd a gentleman say there was only one jackass in Eastborough, an' he taught the singing school. (*Sits chair down r. Loud laughter by HIRAM and DEACON.*)

STROUT. I'll bet a dollar 'twas that city feller. Jackass, am I? Well, he'll find out yet that a jackass can kick as well as bray. (*DEACON's laugh ends in violent coughing.*) That's right, choke! (*Turns to counter r.*) Give me one of my cigars and I'll be goin'.

HIRAM. We're all out of your brand, Professor; we've ordered a new box from Boston. Father's gone down to the depot now to get 'em up with the mail.

STROUT. All right, I'll call in again. (*Exit—looking impertinently at ARTHUR as they meet.*)

(Enter ARTHUR HASTINGS c. from R. with letter in his hand. He looks about, then goes to post office.)

HIRAM. (At counter) Stamp, sir?

ARTHUR. No. Who usually gets the mail for the Putnam's?

HIRAM. Sometimes Lindy Putnam and sometimes whoever happens to be going up that way.

ARTHUR. This letter is for Miss Lindy Putnam; may I rely upon its delivery to her and no one else?

HIRAM. I'll see that it is delivered to her and no one else. (Winks.) Oh! If it will please you better, I'll give it to her myself, when she comes in.

(In the meantime ARTHUR has taken a dollar bill from roll in vest pocket.)

ARTHUR. (Offering dollar) Thank you. Won't you accept this for your trouble?

HIRAM. (Eyeing bill longingly) No, sir; that corner of the store belongs to Uncle Sam and we are paid by him to run it honestly. (Crosses R.) But this side of the store belongs to Benoni Hill and Son, and over here, we can charge what we darn please.

ARTHUR. (Smiling) I understand. Have you any cigars?

HIRAM. Yes, sir; what kind would you like?

ARTHUR. About two for a dollar.

HIRAM. What's that?

ARTHUR. I said, two for a dollar. (DEACON and HIRAM turn in astonishment.)

HIRAM. Yes, sir. (Begins to whistle, takes down a box marked "two for five cents," removes the sign and passes the box to ARTHUR. He takes two, puts one in his pocket and lights one. Gives the dollar to

HIRAM, who puts it in drawer.) Nice weather we're having.

ARTHUR. Beautiful! (*Business lighting cigar.*)

HIRAM. (*Busy with boxes, etc.*) Pretty good crops down your way?

ARTHUR. Not much interested in crops.

HIRAM. Oh! I see, you're from the city.

ARTHUR. Yes.

HIRAM. That's what I thought.

ARTHUR. (*Examining cigar*) Did you say these were two for a dollar?

HIRAM. That's what you paid for them.

ARTHUR. Yes, I guess I did all right. (*Going up c., stops, looks at cigar.*) Fearful! (*Throws it down c.* ARTHUR bumps into STROUT, who has just entered L.C.) I'd advise you to look where you are going. (*Exits L.C.*)

STROUT. (*Looking after him*) And I'd advise you to go where you are looking. (*Coming forward.*) Who is he, Hiram?

HIRAM. Don't know; stranger to me.

STROUT. Another city chap! Better move Boston down here'n be done with it.

MANDY. (*Enters with jug, c. Crosses to counter, puts jug on counter*) M'lasses!

(*Exit HIRAM with jug R.2E., as though going down cellar.*)

STROUT. Now, Mandy, didn't you really enjoy my concert?

MANDY. (*Facing counter*) Some parts of it, but I thought Mr. Sawyer's whistling was jest grand.

STROUT. There it goes again! He'll whistle another kind of tune in a few days.

MANDY. (*Turning*) What? Are you going to give another concert?

STROUT. If I do, you bet he won't be one of the

performers! (STROUT exits in rage c.l., followed by DEACON c.r., laughing.)

(HIRAM enters with molasses jug and comes around end of counter.)

HIRAM. (*Sidling over to MANDY*) How do you find things, Mandy?

MANDY. (*Who has opened a jar and extracted a pickle, crosses to L.*) By looking for them.

HIRAM. You needn't be so pesky smart with your tongue. Of course I can't keep up with you and you know it. But say, Mandy, what's up?

MANDY. (*Crosses L. behind boxes*) The thermometer! It's a good deal warmer'n 'twas yesterday.

HIRAM. (*Following MANDY*) You're mad cos I eat some o' your doughnuts this mornin'?

MANDY. (*Moving until end of speech*) No; I was goin' to give 'em to the pigs anyway.

HIRAM. (*Still following*) Why, you don't call me a big eater, do you?

MANDY. I never seen you when you wasn't hungry. How do you know when you've got enough?

HIRAM. Well, I allus eats till it hurts me; then I stop till the pain goes away. Say, what did Zeke Pettengill go to the city for?

MANDY. Mr. Pettengill don't confide his private business to me.

HIRAM. I bet a dollar you know why he went, just the same.

MANDY. I bet a dollar I do. (*Laughs. HIRAM laughs loudly. She stops suddenly.*) What are you laughing for?

HIRAM. Come down to the fine p'int, Mandy, durned if I know.

MANDY. You oughtn't to laugh at anything unless you understand it.

HIRAM. (*Crosses to chair*) Guess I wouldn't laugh much then. But say, Mandy, what did Petten-gill go to the city for?

MANDY. He had a telegraph message come last night.

HIRAM. Gee! Nobody dead, I hope.

MANDY. No, but his sister Alice is very sick and wanted him to go right up to Boston to see her.

HIRAM. Zeke must think a powerful lot of that sister of his'n. Went right off to Boston without his breakfast.

MANDY. I don't know but one thing that would make you go without your breakfast.

HIRAM. (*Crosses l. to MANDY*) What's that, Mandy—you?

MANDY. No, a famine.

(*READY Whistle.*)

HIRAM. (*Crosses to counter, hands her jug*) Here's your m'lasses. (*Enter DEACON c.* MANDY takes jug, going c.—HIRAM following her—both giggling—she at her own wit, he to agree with her—DEACON over to P.O. HIRAM c., stopping MANDY.) Say, Mandy, I wish it was January.

MANDY. Why?

HIRAM. Cos m'lasses runs slower in January. (*Laughs loudly.* MANDY puts the remainder of pickle which she has been eating in his mouth, and exits with jug c.d.r.) By Goll, I guess all the gals must take my mouth for a general swill tub. (*DEACON goes to door.* STROUT, BOB WOOD and others pass from l. to r.) How do you like your new boarder, Deacon?

(*WHISTLE.*)

DEACON. Mr. Sawyer? Well, he seems to be a nice sort o' chap if he does come from the city. (*ABNER crosses here l. to r.*)

HIRAM. Professor Strout says he's goin' to make the town too hot to hold him.

DEACON. Well, I cal'late, if he meddles with that kind of fire, he might get burned himself. Say, Hiram, who's that drivin' my white mare? (*Looking off L.C.*)

HIRAM. (*Going up to door*) Why, that's Mr. Sawyer, and your daughter Huldy is with him.

DEACON. My darter?

HIRAM. I guess Zeke Pettengill wouldn't like to see Huldy ridin' with him. But Zeke's gone to Boston today. While the cat's away, the mouse can play; eh?

DEACON. Pshaw! Zeke's too sensible to pay any attention to that.

HIRAM. (*Looking R.C.*) Well, here comes Bob with the mail, and he's got Professor Strout's box of cigars.

(Enter BOB WOOD with mail bag and box of cigars, D.C.)

BOB. There you be, Hiram, and— (*Throws bag to HIRAM, who goes to post office and sorts mail.*) Here's those precious cigars Strout thinks so much of.

DEACON. You didn't see Zeke Pettengill down to the train, did you?

BOB. Yes, and looking purty down in the mouth, too!

DEACON. Do tell? Must have heard some bad news down to Boston.

BOB. He brought his sister back with him.

DEACON. What! (*Sharp turn.*) Alice?

BOB. Yes; and I reckon she's putty sick too. He seemed to be leading of her to the kerridge.

DEACON. I want to know! Well, I'm sorry to hear it. (*Exits.*)

(Note: The following lines and business, in order to become effective, should come in "Pantomimic

order." Regular, but without a break or wait of any kind, up to LINDY's entrance.)

MANDY. (*Enters c. quickly—to HIRAM*) Mail sorted yet, Hiram?

(DEACON turns at sound of voice and then continues on.)

HIRAM. (*In moderate tone*) No!

BOB. (*c., speaking gruffly*) Mail sorted yet, Hiram?

(DEACON reaches for chair *c.*, starts, then continues on to *L.*)

HIRAM. (*Sharply*) No!

ABNER. (*Enters c.*) Mail sorted yet? (DEACON about to sit *L.*, rises quickly.)

HIRAM. (*Arranging boxes on top shelf, starting angrily, lets boxes fall, with crash*) G-great Scott! Another! (*Very loud*) No!

ABNER. Well, I'm pesky glad I found out.

BOB. Come on, Hiram, hurry up, won't ye?

HIRAM. (*Angrily striking counter with counter weight. DEACON seated, jumps at sound of counter weight*) How do you think we sort mail, by lightning express?

BOB. No; by ox team; you're so darned slow about it. (*At P.O., throwing ABNER around to R. To ABNER*) You look jest as though you expected a letter.

MANDY. Mebbe he does; the year's putty nigh up since he had the last one.

BOB. (*Looking in post-office window*) Come, Hiram, what are you doin' in there?

DEACON. (*At counter R.; crosses to post-office*) Don't bother him, he's readin' the postal cards.

MANDY. Well, I'll just set down and wait for it.

(*Sits in chair L.C.*) I hope it won't be long, cos I've got some raisin bread to bake 'fore supper. Our boarders have had Johnnie cake so often lately we're afraid they'll complain if I give it to 'em again.

DEACON. How many boarders you got now, Mandy?

MANDY. Twelve of them. Land sakes, there comes the mail now.

(Enter HIRAM from post-office and places about ten letters on rack. They all go to rack and look them over, talking ad lib. HIRAM goes to counter R.)

BOB. (Reading addresses) Sawyer; Sawyer; Sawyer! I declare, there's five letters for that Mr. Sawyer, and not a durned thing for me.

ABNER. Me, nuther!

BOB. You! You never did get but one letter and folks say you writ that one to yourself. (Several laugh at ABNER.) There's one for Lindy Putnam, and it came all the way from New York.

(Enter LINDY C.L. down to R.C. BOB gives LINDY ARTHUR'S letter.)

LINDY. (R.C.) Oh, thank you, Bob, it is very kind of you. (Opens and reads letter. Crosses to R.C.)

MANDY. I'd give a cookie to know what's in that letter.

HIRAM. It's a good thing there ain't a tea kettle here. (All laugh.)

MANDY. Is that so? Well, if everybody in this town minded their own business as well as I do, the town constable would be out of a job. (To BOB) Did you notice how quick she opened it? I'd jest like to study her face while she's readin' it.

BOB. Well, I guess you'll have to study the back of her head.

(Enter ARTHUR rapidly door R.C., pauses and looks about.)

HIRAM. (Approaching ARTHUR and indicating LINDY) There's Miss Putnam, sir.

ARTHUR. (Hurrying to her, L.) Lindy!

LINDY. (Looking up joyfully) Arthur! (They shake hands, then, seeing that they are observed by the idlers, her manner becomes more subdued) Your letter! (Holding it up to view.)

ARTHUR. (Taking his cue from her altered tone, but retaining her hand) Well, your answer?

LINDY. (Sadly, half turning away) Arthur, it is impossible.

(Note: By this time the other characters have crossed to counter R. Everybody watching quietly during the scene between LINDY and ARTHUR. Converse together, but under no circumstances make any gestures or do anything to create laughter or attract the attention of the audience from them to you.)

ARTHUR. Impossible; why? You have accepted my love and even led me to suppose it was returned.

LINDY. Oh, it is, believe me, it is; but—

ARTHUR. Then what is this obstacle to our marriage? If it is a secret, you know that you may trust me. (Pause.) It is nothing of which you are ashamed? Nothing affecting your good name?

LINDY. (Low voice, slowly) I have no name!

ARTHUR. (Startled, drawing back) I—I don't understand you!

LINDY. You know I have no right to the name of Lindy Putnam.

ARTHUR. Yes, you told me that you were only Mrs. Putnam's adopted daughter, but—

LINDY. (*Silencing him with a motion of her hand*) I was so unfortunate as to win the love of Mrs. Putnam's only son. He died, leaving me a fortune; and from that hour she has hated and persecuted me. She has withheld from me my parents' names and she has even hinted that I am—a child—of—shame. (*Covers her face.*)

ARTHUR. (*Recovering and perceiving that they are the subject of gossip*) Sh! Let us step in here and continue our talk unobserved. (*Leading LINDY, exit L.2.*)

MANDY. Now I know who he is.

OMNES. Who is he? Tell us, Mandy, tell us.

MANDY. He's that feller she was gallavantin' with at Newport last summer.

BOB. What's his name?

(Enter ZEKE, goes to post-office. STROUT follows, as though anxious to engage him in conversation. ZEKE gets letter and goes L. of store.)

MANDY. His name's Hastings; his folks are poor as church mice, but awfully stuck up.

DEACON. Do tell!

MANDY. Guess all he wants is Lindy's money; but then, of course—it's none of my business.

STROUT. (*Who has dropped down R. of store*) I tell you, Pettengill, we must both j'ine hands ag'in' that city chap, the destroyer of our happiness, an' smoke him out.

ZEKE. (*Calmly*) I have nothin' ag'in' Mr. Sawyer.

STROUT. Nothin' ag'in' him—an' he out ridin' this minute with Huldy Mason?

ZEKE. (*Changing countenance*) Is that so?

STROUT. Yes, that's so. (*ZEKE starts slightly.*
To ZEKE, significantly) What'd I tell ye?

(*MUSIC.*)

(Enter SAWYER with HULDY. They are laughing and chatting merrily. Greetings are general and very animated. STROUT and ZEKIEL alone are silent and observant.)

(*MUSIC Stops.*)

STROUT. (*At last importantly*) Good evening, Miss Mason. How did you enjoy my concert?

HULDY. Very much; but I was just carried away by Mr. Sawyer's whistling, weren't you?

STROUT. (*Savagely*) No! I weren't. (*General laugh, during which STROUT exits in rage C.R., followed by all extra people.*)

(SAWYER, on entering, goes to post-office rack, takes several letters. At STROUT's exit, goes to HULDY down c., gives her letter. Retires up L.C., reading letter.)

MANDY. (*To HIRAM*) Wonder who he is, what he is, and what he came here for, and how long he's going to stay?

HIRAM. Dunno! All I can say is—he's a mighty good customer, pays spot cash for everything.

MANDY. He seems to be a great favorite with everybody, especially Huldy Mason. I jest saw them out ridin' together; not that it's any of my business, but she ought to be ashamed of herself the way she's been carryin' on with him. Zeke Pettengill's too good a feller to fool with that way—although of course it's none of my business. (*Exits C.D., meeting DEACON c., who bows.*)

(ABNER goes behind SAWYER and is reading his letter over his shoulder. SAWYER turns and

catches him. Bus. of ABNER going c., exits C.L.)

DEACON. (*Seeing HULDY*) Hello, Huldy. Mother sent you down to tell me supper's ready, I s'pose.

HULDY. No, Father; I'm just out for a ride with Mr. Sawyer. (*ZEKE, having finished reading his letter, comes to c.*)

DEACON. Oh! (*Retires up to c.*)

ZEKE. Good evenin', Huldy.

HULDY. (*Turning L.*) Why, are you back, Zekiel? I didn't expect you till the last train. How did you find Alice? (*Slowly going R.*)

ZEKE. Very poorly. I brought her home with me.

HULDY. (*Surprised*) Alice home?

ZEKE. (*Following her*) Yes—will you take a walk up to the house with me, and see her?

HULDY. (*Uneasily*) I'll be up this evenin', Zekiel. I'm out riding now with Mr. Sawyer, and it wouldn't be polite to leave him.

ZEKE. (*Glancing at SAWYER, who is reading his letters*) He doesn't seem to be much interested in you jest now.

HULDY. (*Slowly going R.*) Oh! He excused himself a while to look over his mail.

ZEKE. (*Following*) Well, can't you excuse yourself a while to visit a poor sick girl?

HULDY. I—I told him I'd call on Mrs. Hill while he was readin' his letters,—I'll be up to the house this evenin', Zekiel, don't worry. (*Exits R.2E.*)

ZEKE. (*Looking after her*) She don't seem like the same Huldy to me no more. (*Goes up L.C. to DEACON. They go over to post-office and converse.*)

(Enter ARTHUR and LINDY door L.)

ARTHUR. But Lindy, what you tell me need be no bar to our happiness.

LINDY. Until I can discover who my parents are and come to you with an honest name, I cannot be your wife.

SAWYER. (*Seeing ARTHUR and LINDY—comes quickly down c.*) Arthur!

(He sits chair end of counter. Cat's cradle bus.)

ARTHUR. Quin, old man! (*They clasp hands.*)

LINDY. (*Pleased*) You know each other, Mr. Sawyer?

SAWYER. (*To ARTHUR, gaily*) Do we know each other? (*To LINDY*) Classmates and chums at Harvard. He's often spoken to me of you, and of your foster mother and how she opposes his attentions to you.

LINDY. As she opposes everything that tends to my happiness.

SAWYER. If I were Arthur, I'd pitch her and her opposition to the dev— (*Slight movement, ARTHUR and LINDY*)—to the winds! May I call on you some time, Miss Putnam, and meet this gentle-souled old lady? I should like to have a talk with her.

LINDY. I shall be pleased to receive you at any time, Mr. Sawyer.

SAWYER. (*Playfully, to ARTHUR*) You won't be jealous? Thank you. Don't lose courage and I think we'll soon see the proverbial turning to the lane.

ARTHUR. (*Brightening*) Your confidence inspires me. Lindy, I feel sure that with Mr. Sawyer's help it will all come right. Good-bye, Quin.

LINDY. Good evening, Mr. Sawyer. (*Exit LINDY and ARTHUR c.*)

SAWYER. Arthur has good taste! But why were

foster mothers, stepmothers and mothers-in-law ever invented. (*SAWYER, crossing to counter, sees HIRAM in chair at end of counter, playing "cat's cradle."*) Hello, Hiram. What are you doing?

HIRAM. Jest stunts. (*Pulls strings. Crosses behind counter.*)

SAWYER. (*Crosses to counter*) I've smoked all the cigars I brought from Boston, but Deacon Mason tells me that perhaps you have some that will suit me.

HIRAM. (*Looking over his stock*) Well, I jest had a new box come down on this train, for the most particular customer I have in cigars. Perhaps some of them'll satisfy you till I can git jes' the kind you want. (*Puts box on counter.*)

SAWYER. (*Examining one*) This is a good cigar; I've smoked this brand before. What do you ask for them?

HIRAM. Well, I ought to git ten cents straight, but as this customer ginerally smokes up the whole box afore he gits through, I let him hev 'em for nine cents apiece.

SAWYER. (*Lighting one*) You don't ask enough for them. They sell for fifteen cents, two for a quarter, in Boston.

HIRAM. Gosh! I'd like to run the gineral store and post-office in Boston for about two months, and then I'd retire. How many'll you have?

SAWYER. (*Throws down bill*) I'll take the whole box. (*Takes out a few and puts them in cigar case.*) Please do them up and I will take them up to the house when I go. (*He leans against counter, talking to HIRAM. In the meantime HIRAM has been busying himself about post-office.*)

(BOB WOOD enters at "I'll take the whole box," drops down to store L. and HIRAM crosses to BOB at C.D.)

HIRAM. Say, Bob, Mr. Sawyer has just bought all of Strout's cigars.

BOB. (*With an ugly look at SAWYER*) He did, eh? Well, that's what I call a mean trick, and he ought to git a bust in the eye for it. (*Exits, scowling at SAWYER, C.L.*)

SAWYER. (*Noticing BOB'S actions*) Hiram, who is that stout chap in the straw hat?

HIRAM. Oh! That's Bob Wood, the town bully.

SAWYER. Oh! He's a fighter, eh?

HIRAM. Best fighter in Eastborough. Wouldn't advise you to have any trouble with him, Mr. Sawyer.

(*Meantime ZEKE and DEACON have been talking. Several others have drifted out and can be seen out on piazza.*)

ZEKE. Yes; she's up again, but she's very weak—and that ain't the worst of it.

DEACON. Why, what's the matter?

ZEKE. Well, Deacon, our Allie is almost blind. (*Wipes his eyes. SAWYER shows that he is listening.*)

DEACON. No, not as bad as that, I hope.

ZEKE. Well, the eye doctor says she may git better, but it'll take a very long time. She had to give up her job, so I went down to Boston today and brought her home.

DEACON. What's the doctor say is the matter with her eyes?

ZEKE. He called them cataracts, or something like that.

DEACON. What can I do to help you? You know I always loved Alice. Now Zeke, if you want any money for doctors' bills, or anything else, I'm always ready. (*ZEKE presses his hand.*) Did she ask after me, Zeke?

ZEKE. Almost the first thing she said was, "How is dear old Deacon Mason, and his daughter Huldy?"

DEACON. (*With feeling*) Yeah!

ZEKE. I jest asked Huldy to come up and see her, but she has an engagement to go ridin' with Mr. Sawyer.

SAWYER. (*Coming forward*) Deacon Mason, will you please introduce me to this gentleman?

DEACON. (*Rising*) Certainly. Mr. Pettengill, Mr. Sawyer. (*As DEACON and ZEKE both rise together, they place chairs back in original positions, ZEKE immediately taking a step forward with partly clenched fists, but arm at his side and a half-defiant look on his face. The DEACON, in alarm, quickly catches ZEKE by the arm.*) Now, now! I'm good friends with both on yer—and I hope you'll be good friends to each other.

SAWYER. It shall be no fault of mine if we are not. Mr. Pettengill, I couldn't help overhearing what you said. I surmise that you were speaking of your sister. Please accept my sympathy, and extend it to her in her affliction.

ZEKE. (*Surprised*) Thank you, Mr. Sawyer. (*DEACON releases ZEKE's arm.*)

SAWYER. I had no idea that my ride with Miss Mason would interfere with so important a matter. My team is at the door. As soon as Miss Mason is ready, please take it and convey her at once to your sister.

ZEKE. I'm much obliged, Mr. Sawyer, but I don't want to interfere with Huldy's pleasure. Seein' as how she began to ride with you, I kind o' think she's set her mind on finishin' it in the same company.

SAWYER. Then, with your permission, I'll drive her to your house.

ZEKE. I think it would please Alice.

SAWYER. (*Crosses to counter and gets cigars*)

Then, as soon as she is ready, we'll start. (*Crosses L.*)

(Enter STROUT c. SAWYER and DEACON converse L.C. Meantime, HIRAM has wrapped up box of cigars and given them to SAWYER. ZEKE turns up, meeting STROUT c.)

STROUT. Well, are ye goin' to j'in hands with me ag'in' that city chap?

ZEKE. (*Emphatically*) No! (*Exits door c.r.*)

(STROUT is dumbfounded. Enter BOB WOOD c.L. STROUT leads him down r.c.)

STROUT. Say, Bob! D'ye know what that city chap said about you?

BOB. What?

STROUT. He said there was only one jackass in Eastborough and he sang bass in the quartette.

BOB. (*Excitedly*) He did? Well, I'll fix him!

STROUT. That's right. Fix him! (*Turns to counter. BOB turns up c.*) Did those cigars come down, Hiram?

HIRAM. Yes, but I guess you'll have to wait till I git another box.

(Enter ABNER. He strolls in as if expecting some fun.)

STROUT. What for?

HIRAM. 'Cause Mr. Sawyer bought the hull box and paid me a cent apiece more'n you do.

STROUT. I consider that a shabby trick, and perhaps you'll lose more'n a dollar by it in the long run. (D.R. in disgust.)

HIRAM. Perhaps the gentleman will let you have some on 'em till I kin git another box.

SAWYER. (*With cigar case*) Why, certainly. Allow me to offer you a good cigar, Professor Strout.

STROUT. No, thank you. Judging from the smell of the one you are smoking, I guess they made a mistake in that box and sent second quality. (*All laugh except DEACON, L., HIRAM, R.*)

ABNER. Fust blood for the Professor! (*Comes between SAWYER and STROUT. Is waved back by SAWYER, crossing to back of store.*)

STROUT. Who in thunder are you, anyway, and what are you doin' down here?

SAWYER. I'm trying to be a gentleman, and mind my own business.

HIRAM. (*Down R.*) First round for Mr. Sawyer.

STROUT. Shut up, you dough head! My name is Obadiah Strout; no frills nor folderols about it, neither. That was my father's name, too, and he lived and died an honest man, in spite of it. He raised potatoes and one son; that was me.

SAWYER. Poor man, he was terribly handicapped.

STROUT. When the nation called for volunteers, I went to war to save the money-bags of such as you that stayed at home. It wasn't the Quincys and the Adamses and the other fellers with big names that saved the country, but the rank and file that did the fightin', and I was one of them.

SAWYER. I congratulate you—on your escape. (*Crosses L.*)

(*ABNER, in great glee, strikes his fist on box, and howls with pain.*)

STROUT. They tell me you've been holdin' quite a confab with Lindy Putnam.

SAWYER. Well!

STROUT. Well, I guess that explains the object of

your visit here. You've prob'bly heerd that she's an heiress.

SAWYER. Mr. Strout, I think we'd better leave Miss Putnam's name out of the controversy.

STROUT. You mean you'd better leave it out. As for me, I've got a perfect right to use it, seein' as the young lady in question is a particular friend of mine.

SAWYER. Then, Mr. Strout, use it all you please, but not in my presence. Good evening. (*Starts to go c.*)

BOB. (*Stopping him*) Hold on, there! I believe your name is Sawyer.

SAWYER. Your belief is well founded. I regret that I do not know your name.

BOB. Well, you won't have to suffer long before you find out. My name's Robert Wood, or Bob Wood for short.

SAWYER. (*L.c.*) Ah! I see: Robert for long wood, and Bob for short wood. (*HIRAM laughs.*)

BOB. (*c.*) A friend of mine told me you said there was only one jackass in Eastborough, and he sang bass in the quartette.

SAWYER. (*With a meaning look at STROUT*) Your friend lies. (*BOB looks at STROUT.*)

HIRAM. (*R.*) Well, Professor, it's up to you.

STROUT. Well, I know that he did say it and I have witnesses to prove it. When you fix with him for calling you a jackass, I'll settle with him for calling me a liar. (*Down R.*)

BOB. Take off your coat and get ready, Mr. Sawyer. I won't keep you waiting but a few minutes.

(*BOB takes off coat. They take BOB's coat and hat.*

BOB gets L. of SAWYER, striking sparring attitudes. SAWYER, surprised, stands undecided. STROUT observes this.)

STROUT. Say, Bob, I told you he wouldn't fight. He's a coward. (*Slight pause.*)

SAWYER. (*Quickly removes hat and coat*) Hiram, hold my things. (*Gives him hat, coat and lighted cigar.*)

(*MUSIC: Mocking-bird pp.*)

HIRAM. (*Coming from counter*) Here now, I won't have any of that in here.

(*General confusion, talking ad lib. BOB makes swing at SAWYER, misses, strikes STROUT in stomach, who falls over HIRAM, ABNER and DEACON.*)

BOB. Right out here, Mr. Sawyer; we can get a better footing. (*Goes outside, C.D., followed by SAWYER and others. Then they group in characteristic attitudes in the doorway and on boxes, barrels and counter, all with their backs to the audience, but leaving the center open.*) One moment! Before I hit you, I am going to tell you just exactly where I am going to strike. I shall commence on your right eye. (*Sound of short struggle, and then a blow. Exclamation from the crowd.*) Now, Mr. Sawyer, I see you have a watch in your vest pocket. I am going to hit you just where that watch is and I may injure it. (*Another short struggle and a blow. Exclamation from crowd. BOB gets blow in stomach and falls.*)

STROUT. What the devil are you thinking of, Bob, to let him play with you like that?

HIRAM. Well, it's your turn next.

BOB. (*To STROUT*) I'll settle him this time. (*Another short struggle and blow. BOB down on mattress, R.C., outside.*)

HIRAM. Geewhilikens! What a smasher!

(*Crowd separates down L. HIRAM behind counter.*

STROUT L. SAWYER comes down c.; beckons to STROUT.)

SAWYER. Now, Mr. Strout, I am at your service.

STROUT. (*Rising*) No, sir! I only fight with gentlemen. I know all about this fellow; he's a professional prize-fighter and down in Boston is known by the name of Billy Shanks.

SAWYER. (*Putting on coat and hat*) The statement just made by Mr. Strout is like his statement to Mr. Wood. The first was a lie; the second is a lie; and the man who uttered them is a liar. (*As SAWYER finishes buttoning coat, makes quick movement to put his hands in pockets.* STROUT, startled, jumps backward, falls in chair L., which tips over and he falls among boxes, kegs, etc., etc. HULDY enters R.D., coming c.; meets SAWYER.)

HULDY. I hope I haven't kept you waiting, Mr. Sawyer.

SAWYER. Not at all! I've passed the time very pleasantly. (*Offers his arm, which she accepts.*) Good evening, gentlemen. (*Exit SAWYER and HULDY c. and l. He is calling her attention off to the left so that she won't see BOB, who is supposed to be off right. ABNER and DEACON covering STROUT, so that she will not see him.*)

(MOCKING-BIRD TILL—)

CURTAIN

Second Curtain:

(HIRAM brings in BOB WOOD, who is nearly unconscious, and puts him on floor, with his back against a barrel R.C. in such a position that his face is seen by audience. It is battered and discolored, nose swollen and on one side. Crowd follow and stand at back.)

Third Curtain:

(ABNER and DEACON are assisting STROUT from out the broken boxes to chair L. BOB has fallen over on floor R., near counter. SAWYER has returned for cigar, which he puffs as he is going up, stepping over Bob's body as he exits C.)

FINAL CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE I: *The Cross Roads, near Mason's Corner.*
Cut wood in one, backed by landscape—drop in two.

Music at rise.

Enter ABNER STILES, L.2, with basket on his arm. Stops c.

ABNER. No use talkin', I'm gettin' old. Time was when I could lug ten times that heft 'n' not feel it nigh as much. Well, I guess I'll jest set down here and rest a minute. (*Sits on bank L.C.*)

(*Enter STROUT, L.2E. He is dressed elaborately.*)

STROUT. (R.) Hullo, Deacon, that you?

ABNER. It's me, Obadiah, an' putty nigh tuckered out, too.

STROUT. Never seed you when you wa'nt. An' I'll tell you one thing, you don't want to git tuckered ag'in when you're pumpin' the orgin for me at meetin'.

ABNER. Say, what in thunder was that long-winded tune you was playin' las' Sunday? I never seed a machine chew up wind as that pesky orgin did.

STROUT. Why, that was "The Lost Chord."

ABNER. I should say it was lost, and you hed a

darned long hunt 'fore you found it. I thought my back would gin out 'fore you fetched up with it.

STROUT. Well, 'tain't for you to say what tunes I shall play.

ABNER. What are you all dressed up for today? You don't tog out like that to give music lessons. You're p'inted for Putnam's now.

STROUT. Well, if the lady has shown a preference for me, I don't know as it's anybody's business.

ABNER. Well, folks do say that she shows a preference for that city chap, Mr. Sawyer.

STROUT. (*Crosses to L.*) Look here, Abner; we may as well work together on this thing. We work together Sundays, and I don't know why we shouldn't week days. You kin do me a favor if you will an' mebbe I kin do you one.

ABNER. Hev you got an axe to grind?

STROUT. No! Now, Abner, I've got it into my head that that fellow Sawyer is tryin' to cut me out. He's heerd about Lindy Putnam bein' an heiress, an' he's jest come down here an' planted himself for that purpose. Did you see that fight t'other day?

ABNER. Yes; good un', wa'n't it?

STROUT. That proves what he is. He's a sportin' man. Prob'lly a gambler—mebbe worse'n that. Now such a character don't do our community no good. I ain't going to use force to git rid of him.

ABNER. No; I wouldn't.

STROUT. No; there's other ways. Now if you kin help me git in a wedge now an' then ag'in' his reputation, I think we kin make the town too hot to hold him, don't you?

ABNER. I think we could if we *both* sot to work.

STROUT. You think it over, Abner. There's lots of little ways I kin help you. There's perks to be picked up around the church at funerals an' weddin's. Then I'm thinkin' of buyin' out Benoni Hill's grocery. (*Rises.*) An' if I should be so fortunate

as to marry Lindy Putnam, why I'd be a putty wealthy man. See you at the store tonight. Think over what I've said. (*Exits L.2E.*)

ABNER. (*Looks off R.2*) Hullo, who's this comin' up the road? He's tyin' up his horse. Guess he intends to stop awhile.

(*Enter ARTHUR, R.2E. He is dressed in riding costume.*)

ARTHUR. Good morning, sir.

ABNER. Mornin'.

ARTHUR. (*Looking off L.2E.*) Can you tell me the gentleman's name who just left here?

ABNER. Yes, sir; his name is Strout—Professor Obadiah Strout.

ARTHUR. Do you know where he is going?

ABNER. Well, if I was asked to guess, I should say he'd fetch up at Lindy Putnam's.

ARTHUR. Oh, indeed! Has he business there?

ARNER. Well, rather; he's courtin' Lindy.

ARTHUR. (*Quickly*) What?

ABNER. (*Aside*) Guess that shoe pinches a little.

ARTHUR. Do you mean to say that he dares to make love to her? (*Furiously, advancing on ABNER.*)

ABNER. (*Cowering a little*) Hold yer horses! It's Strout, not me, that's doin' it! (*Then conciliating*) You see—he gives her music lessons, an' some of the boys joke him 'bout takin' more interest in her than he does in his other pupils.

ARTHUR. (*Looking R.*) Why, here's Sawyer now. Hello, Quin, old man!

(*SAWYER enters L.2E., shaking ARTHUR's hand.*)

SAWYER. Well, well, well! It's good for sore eyes to see you. You got my letter?

ARTHUR. Yes.

SAWYER. (*Seeing ABNER*) Good morning, Mr. Deacon. (*Crosses to him.*)

ABNER. Mornin', Mr. Sawyer. (*Exit R.2.*)

SAWYER. (*To ARTHUR*) And so you are still constant to the lady? (*Sits on log.*)

ARTHUR. Don't guy me, Quin.

SAWYER. What does your father say about it?

ARTHUR. Opposes it tooth and nail. Hints at that old-fashioned rot about disinheritance. Did you ever meet Lindy's foster mother, Mrs. Putnam?

SAWYER. Not yet; I expect to have that pleasure this morning.

ARTHUR. Pleasure! Humph! You'll be edified. Quin, your reasoning was always deductive and therefore good. Look the ground over carefully and then advise me.

SAWYER. As I understand it, this old woman claims that Lindy is illegitimate.

ARTHUR. Yes, but it is a lie!

SAWYER. What is her motive?

ARTHUR. Pure deviltry! Oh, if she were only a man, I'd know how to act.

SAWYER. (*Rising*) From all I hear, the old lady's man enough to take care of herself. I think I'll go over at once and make her acquaintance.

ARTHUR. Do! Tell Lindy I would like to see her, but I despise a clandestine meeting.

SAWYER. So do I. Keep your eye on the house and if you see me wave my handkerchief from the window, you'll know the coast is clear.

ARTHUR. Thanks, old man! But really, Quin, I hate to mix you up in this.

SAWYER. Pshaw! It's pastime for me, and who knows but some day I may fall in love myself?

(*Plaintive music through scene until dark change and lights up for next scene.*)

ARTHUR. (*Looking off L.*) By Jove! There's a sad spectacle.

SAWYER. (*Turning*) Zeke Pettengill and his sister. How sweet and dainty she is—but blind. (*Both retire up a little.*)

ARTHUR. Even in this paradise of nature one can find plenty of misery. Well, Quin, I'll canter up the road and wait near the house gate for your signal. (*Exits R.2E.*)

SAWYER. I'll do my best, Arthur. (*Looks at ALICE as though spellbound. Retires R.—is seen through opening.*)

(ALICE and ZEKE enter L.2E. ZEKE is leading her by the hand.)

ALICE. (*At c. opening*) Zekiel! Is it much further to Aunt Heppy's?

ZEKE. Quite a little distance yet. (*Has not seen QUINCY.*) Would you like to rest a minute, Alice?

ALICE. If you can spare the time, Zekiel.

ZEKE. Why, Alice dear, my time is yours. I haven't got a blessed thing to do 'cept try and make you a little happier. (*They sit down on log L.C.*)

ALICE. A little happier? Why, Zekiel, you have made my happiness almost perfect. I don't believe any girl ever had such a good brother as I have.

ZEKE. Hush, Alice, hush! (*There is a break in his voice; he involuntarily turns his head away and presses his fingers to his eyes.*)

ALICE. Where are we now, Zekiel?

ZEKE. We're at the old crossroads. We're settin' under the old tree where you used to set and wait for me when I was kept after school! There's your initials up there; you cut them yourself with my jack-knife. Over yonder is the birch we used to strip our writin' paper from.

ALICE. Oh, yes, I remember. You wrote your first love letter to Huldy Mason on its bark.

ZEKE. So I did. (*A nodding of the head, a patient, settled sorrow by contrast with his present active grief for ALICE.*)

ALICE. And I helped you spell the big words.

ZEKE. Yes. 'Twas only a saplin' then, but now it's a big tree.

ALICE. But the sentiment written on its bark is just as young as ever, isn't it, Zekiel?

ZEKE. I don't know, Alice. I'm afraid Huldy is tired of it.

ALICE. Tired of your love, Zekiel? How could she be?

ZEKE. Well, you see there's a young gentleman from Boston boardin' at her father's house named— (*SAWYER comes forward.*) Mr. Sawyer— (*He rises.*)

SAWYER. Good morning, Mr. Pettengill.

ZEKE. (c.) Mr. Sawyer, this is my sister Alice. Alice, this gentleman's name is Mr. Sawyer.

SAWYER. (R.C., lifting hat) Miss Pettengill.

ALICE. (L.C., partly rising and bowing) Mr. Sawyer.

ZEKE. Mr. Sawyer's boardin' at Deacon Mason's.

SAWYER. But not for long. I am about to make a change.

ZEKE. You be? (*Seems glad.*)

SAWYER. Yes. I find I have been foolish and have been giving the gossips a chance. I shall be more careful in the future. (*QUINCY and ZEKE look meaningfully at each other and clasp hands.*)

ALICE. (L.C.) I hope Mr. Sawyer will not be a stranger at our house.

ZEKE. No; as Mrs. Crowley says—the latch-string is always on the outside.

QUINCY. (R.C., down. *Sturdy, vibrant ring in this*) Thank you; I shall use it quite often.

ZEKE. Are you rested, Alice?

ALICE. Yes, Zekiel.

ZEKE. Then we'll be goin'.

ALICE. Good morning, Mr. Sawyer.

SAWYER. Good morning.

(ZEKE slowly leads ALICE off R.2E. SAWYER watches them a moment, then comes down, looks at their initials on tree; stands on rock, takes out his jack-knife and starts to cut his initials under hers.)

DARK CHANGE

SCENE II

SCENE: MRS. PUTNAM'S sitting room.

Old-fashioned interior. Dark-colored wall-paper. Black haircloth furniture. One large easy chair for MRS. PUTNAM. Large fireplace c. Alcove window r. flat. Door l. flat. Door l. 3E. Old square piano r. 2. Old secretaire desk l. 2. Small glass on wall, l. door, and steps r. 3E.

DISCOVERED: MRS. PUTNAM seated in large chair, r. of c. 2. STROUT standing c. 2, with hat on mantel. LINDY leaning against piano r.

MRS. PUTNAM. Well, you heerd Mr. Strout's offer to marry you. What have you got to say?

LINDY. Such an offer is an insult.

STROUT. (*Coming down*) Mebbe you think, Lindy, that it's your money I'm arter; but it ain't. I want a gal that's sensible and industrious; and I'm willing to work my finger-nails off to pervide for her if she hasn't got a cent.

LINDY. There are plenty of girls in the village who can fill all the requirements without the drawback that I have of possessing twenty thousand dollars.

STROUT. (*Opening his eyes*) Phew! Is it as much as that?

MRS. PUTNAM. Yes, that's the sum—twenty thousand dollars.

LINDY. Yes; Mrs. Putnam takes good care to advertise the fact.

MRS. PUTNAM. And why shouldn't I, sence it was my son that left it to you? But that's all you'll get,—you'll never tech a penny of mine.

LINDY. I do not need or want it.

STROUT. All the more reason you should have a husband who is a trifle older than yourself—*(LINDY looks at him)*—a man of the world—so to speak—a—ahem! a—business man.

MRS. PUTNAM. That's what I tell her; but she'll waste her money on that young whipper-snapper, one of them chaps that's jest looking for an heiress.

LINDY. *(Indignantly)* Mrs. Putnam, I am accustomed to your insults, but when you extend them to Mr. Hastings, I shall not stay and listen to them! *(Starts for stairs.)*

MRS. PUTNAM. Come back here! *(LINDY stops at door.)* I want you to give an answer to Mr. Strout.

STROUT. *(Rising nervously)* N-n-not jest now! She's a leetle bit excited, and might say something she wouldn't exactly mean.

LINDY. Oh, no, Mr. Strout! My mind has been made up on this subject for a long time, and is not—likely to change.

STROUT. I'd better give her a leetle time to think it over. *(Takes up hat.)*

LINDY. I can give my answer now just as well, and I assure you it will be final. This money that I possess has been a constant source of worry and contention. On the day that I am married every cent of it shall go to charitable institutions. The man who marries me shall get nothing but my love, and you are not that man. *(Exit R.3E.)*

(STROUT looks after her and then at MRS. PUTNAM.)

MRS. PUTNAM. The little vixen!

STROUT. Well, do you s'pose she meant what she said 'bout the money and charitable institutions?

MRS. PUTNAM. Not a word of it! Ketch her givin' up so much money. She schemed too long to git it.

STROUT. Well, if she's sot her heart on another feller—better let him have her.

MRS. PUTNAM. She'll obey me or pack up her duds and git out o' here.

STROUT. Well, I'll call ag'in in half an hour or so and give her one more chance. Good mornin', Mrs. Putnam. (*Exit L. flat and pass window.*)

MRS. PUTNAM. (*Looking toward D.R.*) You will go ag'in' me, will you? You little spit-fire, you—you!— (*Is seized with violent fit of coughing. At expiration of same, rising, coming to desk L., talking as she walks*) Now to look up the Captain's letter once more. (*Picks up her cane and hobbles to desk, mumbling*) I'll fix her! I'll fix her! (*Calls*) Samanthy! (*Pounds on floor with crutch*) Samanthy! (*Coughs.*)

(Enter SAMANTHY L.3E. and untidy. *She is a servant girl. MRS. PUTNAM fumbles in pocket and gets bunch of keys, unlocks small drawer and takes out envelope of light brown color, opens it and takes out paper, sits at desk.*)

SAMANTHY. Why, what on earth's the matter? You look real sick.

MRS. PUTNAM. Well, if you don't like my looks, you needn't look at me.

SAMANTHY. Don't you want me to go for the doctor?

MRS. PUTNAM. No; I don't want no doctor. The fust thing I want you to do is to go and comb that frowsy pate of yours, and when you git that done, I

want you to go down to Zeke Pettengill's and tell his sister Alice I want her to come right up here.

SAMANTHY. Yes'm.

MRS. PUTNAM. That's all, an' hurry up about it.
(*Raising cane.*)

SAMANTHY. Yes'm. (*Exit hurriedly L. 3E.*)

MRS. PUTNAM. Ah, that's it! That'll make her change her tune. Now let me see— (*Reads*) "Just off the Banks we lay to on account of fog. During the night heard cries. I sent my mate out in a boat to make a search. In about an hour he came back bringing a half-drowned woman and a little gal baby. I gave the woman some brandy and she came to just long enough to tell me who she was," and so forth and so forth. "The baby was a year old last January. Her name is Linda Fernborough. Heard you say you would like to adopt a girl baby. Come right along quick, for I must be off on another voyage." Ha, ha! She'd give a thousand dollars to read that letter, but she never shall—she never shall! (*Looks at letter.*) If it should get lost or stolen or if I should die—I'll give it to Alice to keep for me. She's the only one I could trust with it.

(SAWYER passes window and knocks at door. At his knock MRS. PUTNAM hurriedly restores letter to desk and locks it, then speaks.)

MRS. PUTNAM. Come in.

SAWYER. (*Enters door L. flat*) Good morning! My name is Sawyer; I met your daughter at the concert the other night.

MRS. PUTNAM. Sawyer; Sawyer! Any relation to Jim Sawyer, that got drunk, beat his wife, starved his children, and finally ended up in the town poor-house?

SAWYER. I think not.

MRS. PUTNAM. Well, I don't blame you for not ownin' up, even if he is your uncle.

(Enter SAMANTHY, dressed grotesquely, L.2E. SAWYER starts. SAMANTHY exits L. flat and passes window.)

SAWYER. Heavens! What an apparition! Your daughter is a very fine singer, Mrs. Putnam.

MRS. PUTNAM. She ought to be. There's been enough money spent on her to make somethin' of her. What do you want with her?

SAWYER. I would like to speak with her a moment, if I may.

MRS. PUTNAM. (Pointing R.) Well, knock on that door; mebbe she'll see you. (Hobbles out L.2E.)

SAWYER. (Goes to door R.2E., knocks, goes to c.) Charming mother-in-law she'll make for Arthur.

LINDY. (Enters down steps R., goes to SAWYER, greets him) Mr. Sawyer, I'm glad to see you. (Shakes hands.) The sight of a friendly face is so welcome here.

SAWYER. I can well understand that. I've just met your amiable foster-mother. Nice old lady, isn't she?

LINDY. Oh, Mr. Sawyer!

SAWYER. But cheer up. I've good news for you. Mr. Hastings is here.

LINDY. Here in Eastborough?

SAWYER. Yes, nearer still; standing at the gate and waiting for my signal that the coast is clear. (Goes to window, raises it and waves handkerchief outside.)

LINDY. (Down R.) Oh, Mr. Sawyer! (ARTHUR passes window.) I dare not meet him here.

(Enter ARTHUR door in flat.)

SAWYER. (*At window r.*) Too late!

ARTHUR. Lindy! (*Goes to her.*)

LINDY. Arthur! (*They are about to embrace, hesitate, conscious of SAWYER's presence.*)

SAWYER. Oh, I'll keep the old lady busy. (*Goes to door L.3E.*) What is her favorite topic? I know. I'll read the Bible to her. (*Exit L.2.*)

(*PLAINTIVE Music.*)

LINDY. (*Gives ARTHUR both hands*) Oh, Arthur, I fear you have done wrong in coming here.

ARTHUR. No, Lindy, I have not. Our affairs can grow no worse than they already are.

LINDY. I have failed. (*LINDY sits r. and hides face in hands.*)

ARTHUR. Come, come, my girl, many happy days are before us yet. Tell me, have you ever tried to buy from her the secret of your birth?

LINDY. Often. Only it is not money she wants, but revenge instead.

ARTHUR. Do you think there is any paper or document in this house relating to it?

LINDY. She never spoke of any.

ARTHUR. Oh, if I thought there was, I'd ransack this old place and find it. (*Crosses c.*)

LINDY. If there were such a paper, it could never be found. She is too cunning.

ARTHUR. (*Beside her*) We have a good friend in Mr. Sawyer, one who will work in our cause as if it were his own. But failing in our object, let us throw conventionality to the winds. As my wife you would be respected by all—

LINDY. Except myself. No, Arthur. I don't know whether I am more sensitive than other girls, but the longing to know who my parents are has become a very passion with me. Call it pride—false pride, if you will—

ARTHUR. (*Bending over her*) No, Lindy, it is

not false pride; it has the ring of the true metal.
(STOP Music.)

SAWYER. (*Enters hurriedly L.3E.*) 'Twas no use. She shut me off at Genesis. She heard your voices and insists on knowing who is here.

LINDY. (*Rising quickly*) Go, Arthur! Go at once.

ARTHUR. (*Going down R.*) No, I shall stay. I am burning to tell her what I think.

LINDY. (*L.c.*) Control yourself, then, for my sake.

ARTHUR. Well, Lindy, for your sake I will try.

(Enter MRS. PUTNAM L.3E.)

MRS. PUTNAM. So! I was right! I knew I heard two voices. Who is this man? (*Goes to chair c.*)

SAWYER. Mrs. Putnam, let me introduce my friend, Mr. Arthur Hastings.

MRS. PUTNAM. What? I don't want to know him. He's a fortune hunter. (*Sits.*)

ARTHUR. Mrs. Putnam, I— (*Crossing indignantly to her.*)

LINDY. (*Restraining him*) Arthur!

ARTHUR. Madam, I overlook the insult for your daughter's sake.

MRS. PUTNAM. She's not my daughter! I'm sick of hearing her called my daughter. I s'pose she had a mother of some kind—

LINDY. (*Turning away*) Oh!

MRS. PUTNAM. But *she* didn't care nothing for her, 'cause she left her in the road, and my fool husband picked her up and brought her home. What her right name is, nobody knows, and mebbe she ain't got none.

ARTHUR. Are you not ashamed to utter such a slanderous lie?

MRS. PUTNAM. A lie, is it? Then prove it one.

LINDY. You are *not* telling the truth, Mrs. Putname; you know who my parents were, but will not tell me.

MRS. PUTNAM. Well, then, have it that way if you will.

SAWYER. Allow me to remind you that there are courts of justice in the land and the law may compel you to speak, or suffer the consequences.

MRS. PUTNAM. The law can't tech me; I've found out all about it. She's been a curse to me ever since the first day I sot eyes on her. Why don't she pack up her duds and get out of my house and so I can die in peace?

LINDY. (*Advancing*) Mrs. Putnam, you will never have the chance to say those words again. I promised your dying son to remain with you as long as you lived, but if the dead know what happens on this earth, I am sure that promise is cancelled. In ten minutes I will leave your house forever. (*Exit up stairs R.3E.*)

ARTHUR. Bravely spoken, Lindy. In ten minutes I shall have a carriage at the door. (*Dropping down R.*)

MRS. PUTNAM. Where are you goin' to take her to?

ARTHUR. That matters not to you.

MRS. PUTNAM. No, and it didn't matter to her mother where *she* went with every Tom, Dick and Harry, so long as somebody else brought up her brats.

ARTHUR. (*Fierce, recovering, advancing*) Mrs. Putnam, henceforth it shall be my greatest endeavor to prove her name an honorable one. And may God spare your life until I bring this falsehood home to you! (*Exits door flat and passes window, followed by SAWYER, who returns immediately.*)

SAWYER. Oh! Please excuse us; we are going out. (*Exits D.F.*)

MRS. PUTNAM. Humph! Let 'em go ahead and prove it, if they can. I've got the only proof and they sha'n't ever see it. The law! Ha! (*Coughs.*) I guess I'll be beyond reach of the law before long. (*Looks R. toward stairs.*) I wonder what she's doin' up there. (*SAMANTHY passes window and enters door in flat L.*) Well, is Alice comin'?

SAMANTHY. (*Looking in glass on wall L.C., loosening bonnet strings*) Yes'm. In a minute. Zeke's bringin' her here.

MRS. PUTNAM. S'manthy, jes' go upstairs, cautious like, and see what that jade is doin'.

SAMANTHY. What jade?

MRS. PUTNAM. How many jades are there in this house?

SAMANTHY. Three of us; you, me and Miss Lindy.

MRS. PUTNAM. (*Striking at her with cane*) None of your sass to me! You know well enough who I mean. (*SAMANTHY starts for stairs.*) Here! You needn't go chattering up and let her know you're listening. Jes' put your eye to the keyhole. 'Twon't be the fust time you've done it.

SAMANTHY. Why, Mis' Putnam! How can you say that? I never done sich a thing in my life!

MRS. PUTNAM. Don't lie to me! One night las' winter I squirted some bed bug powder through the keyhole of my door and you hed sore eyes for a week afterwards.

SAMANTHY. Was it only bed bug powder? Lan' sakes! I thought it was red pepper. (*Exits up stairs R.3.*)

(*MUSIC Plaintive.*)

MRS. PUTNAM. She sha'n't leave here; I won't let her go. I hate her, but she sha'n't go if I can prevent her.

(ZEKE and ALICE pass the window and enter door L. flat.)

ZEKE. Here we are, Alice.

MRS. PUTNAM. (Turning L.) Is that Alice?

ALICE. Aunt Heppy!

MRS. PUTNAM. Bring her here to me, Zekiel, for I am as helpless as she is. (ZEKE leads ALICE to her. ALICE kneels.)

ALICE. Poor Aunt Heppy! I'm so sorry for you. (They embrace.)

MRS. PUTNAM. (Kissing ALICE) Alice! Poor child. Blind! A curse seems to fall on everything I ever loved.

ALICE. Don't say that, dear Aunt Heppy. "He chasteneth whom He loveth," you know; and it might have been so much worse.

MRS. PUTNAM. Can anything be worse than being blind? Yes, my lot is worse, to see too well, to see the wickedness and selfishness and ingratitude of those you've done for all their life.

SAMANTHY. (Enters) Mis' Putnam! Mis' Putnam! She's packin' all her things into a trunk an' she's got on a dress jes' as if she was goin' travel-ling.

MRS. PUTNAM. An' so she is.

ALICE. Are you speaking of Lindy?

MRS. PUTNAM. Yes; I told her to pack up her duds an' never let me see her face again. (To SAMANTHY, who has been listening, raising cane) You get out of here!

SAMANTHY. Yes'm. (Hurriedly exits L.2E.)
(READY Wheels.)

ALICE. Oh, Aunt Heppy, what does it all mean?

MRS. PUTNAM. She's been a curse to me ever sence I've known her. She made my son Jones fall in love with her and when he died he left her all his

money. She robbed me of my son, my only boy. But I'll git even with her; I'll git even with her!

ALICE. (*Rising*) Aunt Heppy, don't take it so hard; I think you're getting better.

MRS. PUTNAM. No, Alice. I'm not a bit better, but I felt as if I must see you. Now sit right down ag'in, dearie; I want to talk to you out here alone. (*They sit together at tree.*)

ALICE. (*Sitting*) It must be something important, that you take such a journey.

MRS. PUTNAM. (*Sitting beside her*) It is. Alice, I'm going to give you a letter, a sealed letter, to keep for me. (*Taking letter from pocket, the same brown one used.*) Here it is. I may ask you for it again some day; but if I don't you must destroy it without its being opened, and within twenty-four hours after my death. Will you promise that?

ALICE. I will if you wish it, Aunt Heppy.

MRS. PUTNAM. I do. Here, take it. (*ALICE takes it.*) I've kept it for twenty years, and nobody has ever read it but me and Silas. You'll keep your promise?

ALICE. My word is sacred, Aunt Heppy.

MRS. PUTNAM. Alice Pettengill, if you break your word to me, I shall be sorry that I ever loved you; I shall repent that I made you my heiress. I shall haunt you as long as you live.

ALICE. (*Shrinking*) Oh, Aunt Heppy, you frighten me! Is some weighty secret confined in this letter?

MRS. PUTNAM. A secret? Yes, and one that must die with me.

ALICE. No—not the evidence of a crime?

MRS. PUTNAM. A crime? No; just the opposite.

ALICE. Then why conceal it?

MRS. PUTNAM. Don't ask questions.

ALICE. It concerns Lindy. It is the secret of her

birth. She is legitimate and that letter proves it. Please take it back. (*Holding out letter.*)

(*Noise of carriage wheels heard. Enter LINDY C. down L.*)

MRS. PUTNAM. Hush! Not another word. (*Putting letter in ALICE's bodice.*) There, dearie, kiss me good night. (*Kisses her.*) Never mind what the letter contains; keep your promise and be content. (*Turns up C.*)

ALICE. (*Kneels*) Oh, no, Aunt Heppy, do not cherish such hatred toward her. It was no fault of hers that your son loved her; she even discouraged that love. Believe me, Aunt Heppy, for I knew them both and grew up with them from childhood.

MRS. PUTNAM. There, Zekiel, take her. (*ZEKE comes down C.L., assists ALICE.*) She's nervous, that's all. (*Rises.*) Come, Alice dear, kiss me once more before you go; it may be the last time I'll git the chance to see you on this airth. (*Kisses her.*)

ALICE. No, no, Aunt Heppy! I *must* see you again; I could never rest if you were to die, feeling as you do toward her. Never, never!

ZEKE. There, there, Alice, you're excitin' yourself and the doctor cautioned you ag'in' it. Come home with me. You can call on Aunt Heppy ag'in, tomorrow. (*Leads her up L.*)

MRS. PUTNAM. Take good care of her, Zekiel; she's worth all your love.

ZEKE. I know that, Aunt Heppy. Come, Alice, come!

(*As ZEKE passes out with ALICE, MRS. PUTNAM hobbles up position just L. of window, where she watches until ALICE passes window.*)

MRS. PUTNAM. (*Coming down to L. of c.*) Ah!

If my son Jones had only lived and married her!
But no; things never work as you cal'late they
should. (*Going L.2E.*)

(*STOP Music.*)

(*Enter SAMANTHY L.2E. with dust cloth; meets her.*)

SAMANTHY. Shall I dust the room now, ma'am?

MRS. PUTNAM. Yes! (*Hobbles across L., then turns.*) An', Samanthy, if that jade upstairs starts to leave the house, call me afore she gits away.

(*STROUT passes window.*)

SAMANTHY. Yes'm. (*Exit MRS. PUTNAM L.3E.*) Sumpin's goin' to happen. I wonder why Miss Lindy's going to leave? I don't blame her; I'd leave go myself if I could git another job. (*Dusts the furniture. A loud knock at door. Startled.*) Come in!

STROUT. (*Enters D.L.E.*) Oh, it's you, is it?
(*Seeing SAMANTHY.*) Go tell Mrs. Putnam that I've called for an answer; she'll know what I mean.

SAMANTHY. (*Puts glass on writing desk*) Yes, I know what you mean, too. Ain't nothin' goin' on 'round this house that I don't see or hear. (*Exits L.3E.*)

STROUT. (*Puts his hat on piano and picks up music sheets. Reading titles*) "Waiting," "What will the answer be," "Go way back and set down." (*Throws down music, disgusted.* Enter MRS. PUTNAM L.3E.) Well, Mrs. Putnam, I've called for Lindy's answer.

MRS. PUTNAM. (*In chair R.C.*) I'm afraid it's no use; she's sot on hevin' the other fellow. She's upstairs now packin' up her things to leave the house.

STROUT. (R.) I hearn tell he was in town. He was down to the livery stable orderin' the best rig they've got.

(*READY Wheels.*)

MRS. PUTNAM. Mr. Strout, if she should marry you after I'm dead—I don't expect she will—but stranger things have happened—so I say, if she should, I want you to know that she has got a name and that she was born in holy wedlock. But if she won't marry you, I want her to go to her grave thinkin' she's a nameless brat, and never know who her parents were.

STROUT. That suits me, Mrs. Putnam. Tell me her father's name and I promise to keep it a secret.

MRS. PUTNAM. No, I won't; I won't trust you or anyone else with it. I'll write it down an' put a proviso in my will that you are to have it on condition that you marry her. Yes, and I'll do it now. Give me that lap desk on top of the other desk. (*Pointing to desk L.*)

STROUT. (*Passing desk to her*) Now make that proviso good and strong, Mrs. Putnam, for you can't tell what might happen.

MRS. PUTNAM. (*Still writing*) Oh, I'll be as careful as I can, don't worry—— There! (*Finishing letter, folding and enclosing it, using blotter while speaking and accidentally pushing blotter off on floor.* STROUT picks it up. *She hands him lap desk; he places blotter on top.*) There! Her father's name is in that paper. (*STROUT going L. with lap desk. Noise of wheels heard at back. Effect of carriage wheels.* STROUT turns quickly. *Blotter falls L.*) What's that?

STROUT. (*Going to window*) Here comes Mr. Hastings and that city chap is with him.

(*PLAINTIVE Music.*)

(Enter LINDY down stairs in traveling dress.)

MRS. PUTNAM. Where are you going to?
LINDY. To leave this house.

(ARTHUR and SAWYER enter D.F.)

MRS. PUTNAM. Go upstairs and take off that dress! Do you hear me? I say you sha'n't go!

ARTHUR. (Crossing to LINDY) And I say she shall! You have forfeited all claim to her obedience. (They start for door.)

(SAWYER has dropped down L., sees the blotter, picks it up casually, goes to desk, turns back to audience. During MRS. PUTNAM's next speech is attracted by the ink impression made on blotter. Quietly takes small mirror from wall and notes the reflection of writing in mirror. This must be unseen by audience.)

MRS. PUTNAM. Stop and hear what I've got to say. Stop, or you'll be sorry for it. (They stop.) I have just written in this letter—(Holding it up)—what you'd give a thousand dollars to know—yes, ten thousand. Obey me, and marry the man I choose and I'll put it in your hands; but jest as sure as you leave this house with that man, I'll tear it to pieces. Now what do you say?

LINDY. Come, Arthur, let us go. (Bus. grab letter. LINDY goes to door U.L. with ARTHUR.)

MRS. PUTNAM. (Tearing letter) There, now go—

(MUSIC Changes To "Mocking Bird.")

SAWYER. (Who has been standing near desk) One moment, Mrs. Putnam, let me congratulate you on writing a good plain hand. (Goes to L.C.)

ARTHUR. (Coming down with LINDY L.) Sawyer, my friend, what do you mean? You know something?

SAWYER. Yes, I know her father's name.

MRS. PUTNAM. It's a lie, I say! I never breathed it to a living soul.

ARTHUR. Speak, man; for God's sake, what is it?

SAWYER. (*Hands him mirror*) Look in that mirror and read. (*Holds blotter in front of it*.)

ARTHUR. (*Looking in mirror, reads*) "Her father's name is Lord Fernborough of Fernborough Castle, Kent, England!" Lindy! (*Embraces her*.)

(*MUSIC Forte Till Curtain.*)

MRS. PUTNAM. It's a lie—a lie! (*Snatches blotter from SAWYER and tears it in a rage*. SAWYER laughs loudly and shakes hands with ARTHUR. MRS. PUTNAM has coughing fit, and is helped to chair by STROUT.)

CURTAIN

(SECOND PICTURE: ARTHUR and LINDY in door F. QUINCY just in front of them. MRS. PUTNAM in chair, exhausted. STROUT fanning her with a handful of sheet music. As the curtain is falling, MRS. PUTNAM strikes at STROUT with cane.)

(THIRD PICTURE: STROUT r. MRS. PUTNAM in chair. SAWYER in door. ARTHUR and LINDY l.)

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE: ZEKE PETTENGILL'S farm-yard.

October. Characteristic New England farm-yard house R. Barn obliqued up L., showing interior through open doors. Floor of barn about two feet higher than level of stage with run to meet it. Large roof tree R. Outbuildings scattered about, such as corn-crib, wood shed, carriage shed, hen house, pig pen, bee hives, etc. Autumnal landscape. Other farms in the distance. Sunset effect.

Farm music at rise.

DISCOVERED: HIRAM sitting down R. with a deal board about three feet long on which he is painting, in black letters, a sign "For Sale," singing as he works. MRS. CROWLEY enters from barn L. with two milk pails, full of milk.

HIRAM. Hello, Mrs. Crowley!

MRS. CROWLEY. Is that you, Hiram?

HIRAM. Yes. Bin milking?

MRS. CROWLEY. I have! And ye'll notice that I don't stop at the pump, aither; we niver spake as we pass by. (*Exits in house R.*)

(Enter DEACON through gate c. with small box of tools.)

DEACON. Oh, here you be! I thought I'd find you here.

HIRAM. Well, I got all my chores done up to the house.

DEACON. I know you hev. I tell you when a feller's got his eye on a gal, how he does hustle to git his chores done, so's he kin git near her. What yer doin' of? (*Observing lettering on board.*)

(Enter ZEKE L.2E. with milk pail and three-legged stool.)

HIRAM. Paintin' a sign for Zeke Pettengill.

ZEKE. Yes, I'm goin' to sell my ol' carryall, an' as Hiram prides himself on his letterin' I thought I'd git him to try his hand on that. (DEACON crosses L.)

HIRAM. I'm stuck now, though.

DEACON. (*Turning*) What's the matter?

HIRAM. I forget how to make an "S." Does it go this way, or that way?

ZEKE. Guess it don't make much odds.

DEACON. No; everybody 'round here'll know what it's meant for.

HIRAM. Well, I'll take a chance at it this way. (*Makes it wrong.*)

DEACON. Zekiel, I want to borrow your grindstone. Hiram'n me's to do some work on the barn this fall an' I want to git the tools in order. (*Going up L.*)

ZEKE. Help yourself, Deacon. Goin' to stay to the huskin', ain't you?

DEACON. Well, if there's any fun goin' on, I cal'late to see it.

ZEKE. I guess you'll do your share towards makin' of it, too. (*Exits in barn. DEACON follows and is seen working at grindstone.*)

(Enter MANDY from house R.)

MANDY. (*With mug of cider*) Here's your cider, Hiram. (*Placing it on seat.*) For goodness' sake, Hiram Maxwell, hain't you got that sign done yet?

HIRAM. I ain't in any hurry; huskin' won't begin for an hour yet.

MANDY. No; you're afraid if you git it done too soon, you might be given something else to do. What's it for, anyway? Are they goin' to stick it up on Hill's grocery?

HIRAM. No, that's goin' to be sold by auction.

MANDY. Who do you think'll buy it?

HIRAM. Well, I heerd that Strout wuz goin' to make a strong bid for it.

MANDY. Well, if he gits it, I'll never trade there.

HIRAM. You mean *we'll* never trade there.

MANDY. Oh, git out! (*Pushes him over; he laughs. She exits in house R.*)

STROUT. (*Enters*) Oh, is that you, Hiram? Where's Pettengill?

HIRAM. (*Resumes painting sign*) Dunno!

STROUT. Is he 'round?

HIRAM. No; he's square.

STROUT. Smart, ain't you? What you paintin' that sign for?

HIRAM. For Hill's grocery store.

STROUT. Well, you needn't. I guess it's putty well understood who's goin' to buy it.

HIRAM. I s'pose you mean yerself.

STROUT. Well, what if I do?

HIRAM. 'Twon't do you no good unless you're app'nted postmaster.

STROUT. Well, I guess we can swing that around all right.

HIRAM. I s'pose you expect to be tax collector another year, too?

STROUT. I dunno as your vote can take it away from me.

HIRAM. An' pound reeve, too?

STROUT. What of it if I do?

HIRAM. Nuthin'! Only I wuz thinkin' they may as well give you the keys of the town, so's you can lock it up when you go to bed.

STROUT. Well, if I hed the keys of the town, there's some folks'd be locked out pretty durn quick, an' your city friend is one of 'em. (*He is standing on doorstep R., facing HIRAM.*)

(MRS. CROWLEY enters and blows a fish horn in his ear. He jumps.)

MRS. CROWLEY. Supper!

STROUT. (L.C.) Why in thunder didn't you p'int that thing t'other way?

MRS. CROWLEY. Did it scare you?

STROUT. Scare me? It nearly deefened me.

MRS. CROWLEY. You must have thought I wuz the angel Gabriel. (*Exits, singing "When Gabriel Blows His Trumpet in the Mornin'."*)

(Enter ZEKE from barn with pail of milk. Crosses to house R.)

HIRAM. If she wuz an angel, she'd want green wings.

STROUT. (Crosses to ZEKE) Hullo, Pettengill! You're jest the man I wuz lookin' for.

ZEKE. (R.C., putting down pail) Well, Mr. Strout, what can I do for you?

STROUT. You can help me fix that city chap. He's gettin' more and more obstreperous. Why, all the gals in town are gettin' crazy over him.

ZEKE. I know one that ain't.

STROUT. I s'pose you mean Huldy Mason. Then why does she go ridin' with him so often?

ZEKE. Well, that's her business.

STROUT. Well, if I wuz you, I'd make it mine.

ZEKE. Yes, I guess you would; but I haven't got time. I'm afraid I'd have to neglect some of my own affairs.

STROUT. Why, pretty soon it'll git to the place where all the fellers in town'll have to stand aside till he's picked out the gal he wants.

ZEKE. Well, Mr. Strout, I don't know what you're goin' to do about it; he's licked the best fighter in town, so I wouldn't advise you to try that.

STROUT. Well, this town ain't big enough to hold him and me too.

ZEKE. Well, he told me t'other day he expected to stay for some time.

STROUT. Is he comin' to the huskin' tonight?

ZEKE. I've invited him.

STROUT. Well, then you'll have to excuse me.
(*Sits L.*)

ZEKE. Well, we'll git along the best we can.

(MRS. CROWLEY enters on steps.)

MRS. CROWLEY. Are yez ever comin' to supper?

ZEKE. In a minute, Mrs. Crowley.

MRS. CROWLEY. Well, hurry up; your tay is all poured out. (*Exits.*)

ZEKE. (*Picking up pail*) Hev some supper, Deacon?

STROUT. Oh! Supper! (*Rising in pleasurable anticipation.*)

DEACON. No, thank you, Zekiel, I've hed mine.

ZEKE. You, Hiram?

HIRAM. I hed mine, too.

(STROUT, expecting invitation also and not getting it, returns up stage as HIRAM and DEACON laugh.)

STROUT. (*Coughs, but ZEKE pays no attention*

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and exits in house r.) Deacon, I want to talk to you about a little matter. (Goes into barn.)

DEACON. What is it, Mr. Strout? (*They sit in barn and converse.*)

MANDY. (*Down to HIRAM; enters from dairy*) Cider most give out, Hiram?

HIRAM. No, some left yet. (*Looking in mug.*)

MRS. CROWLEY. (*On steps of cottage*) Mandy Skinner, are yez goin' to l'ave me do up all the wark, while you're lally-gaggle with that bucko there?

MANDY. I'm comin', Mrs. Crowley.

MRS. CROWLEY. Faith, you're rightly named Mandy, for you've got man on the brain.

MANDY. Well, you haven't. You've got Abner Stiles; he's the only stylish thing in the neighborhood. (*Exit MRS. CROWLEY and MANDY in house, quarreling.*)

(*HIRAM grinning at her, apple one hand, mug in the other. MRS. CROWLEY knocks his hat off and exits in house. HIRAM secures hat and resumes painting.*)

STROUT. Well, Deacon, that's how the matter stands; if you can let me hev the five hundred dollars, I can give you fust mortgage on the store.

DEACON. Well, Obadiah, I guess I can accommodate you. I don't see any reason just now why I can't. How soon do you need the money?

STROUT. Well, the auction comes off next Wednesday.

DEACON. Well, I'll go over to the bank Monday an' git it.

STROUT. Thank you, Deacon; I'll do as much for you some day. Hullo! Here comes your darter Huldy, an' durned if that city chap ain't with her ag'in.

(Enter HULDY and SAWYER, gate c.)

SAWYER. Good evening, Professor.

STROUT. How do, Huldy.

HULDY. Good evening, Professor! How's your cold?

STROUT. What cold? I ain't got no cold.

SAWYER. I thought you had a freeze-out at Mrs. Putnam's the other day. Your nose looks a trifle red. (Goes down to HIRAM.)

STROUT. (Coming down to HULDY) That feller never meets me but he insults me.

HULDY. (Crosses to STROUT) You must admit that you began it, Professor.

STROUT. Yes, an' I'll end it, too. (*Talks with her up to gate. Exit HULDY and STROUT L.U.E.*)

SAWYER. Hiram, in what regiment did Mr. Strout serve?

HIRAM. Fourteenth Massachusetts. (SAWYER writes in notebook.)

SAWYER. Was he ever wounded in battle?

HIRAM. One of the sick fellers in the hospital gave him a lickin' one day. I don't suppose you call that a battle.

SAWYER. How about that rigamarole he got off down to the grocery store that day?

HIRAM. Oh, that was all poppycock.

SAWYER. What town offices does he hold?

HIRAM. Well, he's fence viewer, hog reeve and pound keeper; but the only thing he gits much money out of is tax collector.

SAWYER. (Writing) Did he get a big vote for the place?

HIRAM. No; he just got in by the skin of his teeth.

SAWYER. Has Strout got anybody to back him up on buying the grocery store?

HIRAM. Well, he's jest been buzzin' the Deacon

putty confidentially. I tried my durndest to catch a word now and then, but I couldn't.

SAWYER. How much is to be paid in cash?

HIRAM. Five hundred dollars.

(Enter SAMANTHY with small tin pail through gate c., eating apple. Goes to barn door, looks. Same to tool house, then turns to R., stops suddenly upon meeting SAWYER, who looks at her smilingly a moment, then looks down at her feet. She, perceiving it, raises one foot to hide it.)

SAWYER. Good evening, Samanthy! How is Mrs. Putnam?

SAMANTHY. She's wusser'n she's been yet. She's takin' on something orful. She's broke mos' every plate in the house firin' at my head.

SAWYER. Well, I'm sorry!

SAMANTHY. What for—my head?

HIRAM. No, for the plates. (Rising, laughing, U.C.)

SAMANTHY. She sent me over to see if Mr. Pettengill could spare her a little fresh milk.

SAWYER. He's in the house. I'll ask him for you; wait here, Samanthy. (Exit in house.)

(SAMANTHY is about to sit on HIRAM's sign. HIRAM, who is drinking out of mug, starts.)

HIRAM. Look out! (Bringing down sign.)

SAMANTHY. (Jumping L.) O-o-o-o-o—! What is it—a hornit?

HIRAM. No, but you come near settin' on my sign. (Turning R.) Gol durn it. Jes' think how you'd look goin' down the road marked "For sale."

SAMANTHY. I've been marked "for sale" for a

long time; but nobody seems to think I'm the genuine article.

HIRAM. How kin you be the genuine article when you jes' said Mis' Putnam plated you? (HIRAM laughs.)

(Enter ZEKE from house R. Enter STROUT and HULDY, L.U.E.)

ZEKE. Well, Samanthy, our milk's all been put to "set," but I haven't milked the old brindle cow yet. If you've a mind to, you can go right into the barn and milk her. Help yourself to all you want.

SAMANTHY. (Going L., suddenly stopping) Does she kick?

ZEKE. No, she's as gentle as a kitten. Good evenin', Huldy.

HULDY. (Leaving STROUT and going to ZEKE) Good evening, Zekiel.

(SAMANTHY exits in barn. HIRAM looks about for safe place to put sign, finally lays it on bench up L., then goes R., gets brush and paint and exits in barn, eating the while. STROUT starts up to gate.)

ZEKE. Comin' back to the huskin', Mr. Strout?

STROUT. Oh, mebbe I'll drop in for a while. (Exit through gate off R.)

ZEKE. I'm awful glad you've come to the huskin', Huldy.

HULDY. Why, did you think for a minute that I wouldn't come? (Crosses c.)

ZEKE. I didn't know. Somehow you haven't acted the same to me lately as you used to. (Going D.R.)

(PLAINTIVE Music.)

HULDY. Zekiel, I'm afraid that I have wronged

a certain person and that he will never forgive me. But I am sorry for what I have done, and I'm going to tell him and ask for pardon.

ZEKE. Well, if that person don't forgive you, I don't want nothin' more to do with him. (*Getting down below steps R.*)

HULDY. (*Goes to steps R.*) Let me tell you a little story. A little boy and girl, whose homes were not a quarter of a mile apart, grew up together in a little country town. As children they loved each other, and, as they grew older, that love really grew stronger, though not so plainly shown or spoken. Everybody thought that one day they would be married, though he had never asked her to be his wife. Did you ever hear anything like that, Zekiel?

ZEKE. (*Who has followed*) Well, I have in my mind two persons whose relations were pretty similar, up to a certain point.

HULDY. Yes, and that point was reached when a young man from the city came to board in her father's house. (*Crosses to steps—house.*)

ZEKE. Yes, I've heard of something like that.

HULDY. For a time she felt flattered by this young man's attentions and even encouraged them, to the neglect of her old-time lover. But she soon learned that they were only the attentions of a well-bred gentleman and nothing more. Then she learned of the village gossip and was brought to a realizing sense of how she was wronging her old sweetheart. Supposing you were the man, Zekiel, and I the woman in this little story, could you forgive me if I said I was sorry and would never do so again?

(*CRASH.*)
(*STOP Music.*)

ZEKE. Could I forgive you, Huldy? (*He turns and, bending over the stair railing, draws HULDY up into his arms and kisses her. Loud racket in barn and SAMANTHY appears, dishevelled and*

scared. *After laughing subsides*) What's the matter, Samanthy?

SAMANTHY. It wuz kind o' dark in there, an' I—
I—guess I tried to milk the wrong cow.

(Enter HIRAM from out-building, laughing at SAMANTHY.)

ZEKE. (*Crossing to L.*) Well, you come with me, Samanthy, an' I'll git you all the milk you want. Oh, Huldy, will you go in and see Alice a few minutes?

HULDY. Certainly, Zekiel. (*Starts for house.*)

ZEKE. Come, Samanthy. (*Exits with SAMANTHY in barn.*)

HIRAM. (*Overtaking HULDY*) Say, Huldy! (*HULDY stops.*) I'm goin' into the dairy for a while. Jest see if you can't persuade Mandy it's time to do the skimmin', will you?

HULDY. (*Laughing*) I'll do my best, Hiram. (*Exits in house R.*)

HIRAM. She looks kind o' happy an' I thought I saw a twinkle in Zeke's eye, too. I bet they've made up. Well, if I can git Mandy in the dairy for a few minutes, an' that Irish angel don't interrupt us, I may have a twinkle in my eye, too. (*Exits in dairy R.*)

(Enter QUINCY from house.)

SAWYER. (*Sits on steps, reading notebook*) Let me see. "Tomorrow, telegraph to Washington to hold up Obadiah Strout's appointment as Postmaster; Monday, expect his war record from Adjutant General; Tuesday, see Dr. Tillotson, the occulist; Wednesday, buy Hill's grocery store; Thursday, attend town meeting and block Mr. Strout as tax collector." And yet the city fellers think it's dull in

the country! (*DEACON has put his tools in a box and is now leaving barn.*) Deacon, I'm going to ask you a question which, of course, you can answer or not, as you see fit.

DEACON. (*Down R.C., rolling down sleeves*) I don't think you'd ask me a question I ought not to answer.

SAWYER. Well, are you going to let Strout have the money to pay down on account of the grocery store?

DEACON. Why, yes, I guess you've hit it about right. I kinder thought I wuz perfectly safe in lettin' him hev it.

SAWYER. Oh, you'd be all right, Deacon, financially, if any good man endorsed the note; but I don't think he'll need the money. How high will he bid?

DEACON. Well, he told me he expected twenty-five hundred would fetch it.

SAWYER. Well, Deacon, I happen to know a man who is going to bid on that grocery store and he'll have it, even if it costs five thousand dollars. (*Indicates that he is the man.*)

DEACON. Well, I guess I'd better not bother about goin' to the bank. (*QUINCY and DEACON go up L.C. Gets tools.*)

(*PLAINTIVE Music Till ALICE On And Seated.*)

SAWYER. I guess we understand each other, Deacon.

DEACON. I guess we do.

(*Enter HULDY, leading out ALICE, seats her R.*)

HULDY. Oh, Alice, sit here; it's getting dark now and the party'll soon be here.

ALICE. Don't bother with me, Huldy; you know I am used to being alone.

HULDY. Mr. Sawyer is here; he'll keep you com-

pany. Father, Mrs. Crowley insists on you taking a cup of tea.

DEACON. (*Crossing to ALICE*) She does, eh? Well, I guess I'll hev to drink it, then. I'd be afraid to refuse. Well, Alice, how be you? (*Patting her on shoulder.*)

(Enter ZEKE and SAMANTHY from barn. She has pail of milk.)

ZEKE. Don't forgit the huskin' bee, Samanthy.

SAMANTHY. No; I'm comin' right back, jes' as soon as I can git Mis' Putnam to sleep. (*Exits through gate with DEACON c.r.*)

(ZEKE meets HULDY C., converse a little and stroll out through gate and down the road. SAWYER approaches ALICE. Sunset begins to fade—works gradually from red to green.)

SAWYER. Have you answered your letters yet, Miss Pettengill?

ALICE. No, I have not even heard them read. Is Zekiel busy?

SAWYER. Yes, he's very busy just now. (ZEKE's arm around HULDY.)

ALICE. Then I won't trouble him.

SAWYER. If I could be of any service to you, Miss Pettengill, you know that I have both the time and willingness to do so.

ALICE. (*Taking letter from pocket*) I don't think I should dare to let you read this letter. (*Exit ZEKE and HULDY, lovingly, c.r.*)

SAWYER. Oh, if it is something private, I beg your pardon.

ALICE. Oh, no, it is not that; no doubt it is from a lady friend, but I have always heard that men consider such letters silly and childish.

SAWYER. Perhaps I have not told you that I have two sisters and am used to that sort of thing. When I was at college, hardly a day passed that I did not get a letter from one or the other and they brightened up my life immensely.

ALICE. (*Giving him letter*) Well, then you must promise not to laugh.

SAWYER. (*Taking it and opening it*) I do. (*Reads*) "My dear Alice"— (*Looks at her lovingly*.)

ALICE. Well—

SAWYER. That's in the letter.

ALICE. Yes, I know.

SAWYER. "How are you getting along in that dismal country town, and how are your poor eyes? I heard that the great oculist, Dr. Tillotson, is going down there to visit you at the solicitation of a gentleman named—" (*Breaks off abruptly, then to himself*) How did she get my name!

ALICE. (*Wondering at his silence*) Well—"at the solicitation of a gentleman named—" Why don't you continue?

SAWYER. Oh, the name doesn't matter—or—I mean—

ALICE. (*Divining the truth*) Oh, Mr. Sawyer, it was yourself.

SAWYER. Oh, no, really, Miss Pettengill.

ALICE. I am sure of it.

SAWYER. Yes, Tillotson is an old friend of mine, and if anybody on earth can help you, I feel that he can.

ALICE. And you did this for me?

SAWYER. Oh, no, for Dr. Tillotson. You see, he is young and ambitious and if he succeeds in curing you, what a triumph it will be for him and incidentally for me.

ALICE. My friend, you seek to hide your good-

ness. How can I ever repay you the great sum of money that it will cost for my treatment?

SAWYER. Miss Pettengill, God knows that if half, or even the whole of my fortune would give you back your sight, I would give it to you willingly—do you believe me, Alice?

ALICE. (*Giving her hand*) I believe you. Go on with the letter.

SAWYER. "Every time I see my sister, Stella, she waves your photograph before my eyes. You know you promised me one, and if you will send it now, I will consider it just as nice as a good long letter. As someone else will probably read this for you, in order to keep them from committing a robbery, I send you only one kiss." (*He looks at her lovingly.*) "From your loving Emma Farnum."

ALICE. Are you smiling, Mr. Sawyer?

SAWYER. Not at all; I am looking grieved because Miss Farnum has such a poor opinion of me.

ALICE. Emma is a dear good girl. I will answer her letter, as she suggests, by sending her the promised photograph. On the bureau in my room, Mr. Sawyer, you will find an envelope containing six photographs. Would you kindly get me one?

SAWYER. Certainly! Back in just a minute.
(*Exits in house.*)

(*Loud racket in dairy. Sound of tin pans falling.*)

MANDY. (*In dairy*) Now, Hiram Maxwell, you come nigh upsettin' that whole pan o' milk.

HIRAM. (*In dairy*) Well, you pushed me.

(LINDY enters L.U.E. Crosses to ALICE, speaks to her. Crossing to tree, sits with ALICE. ABNER enters c., dressed for the husking, down L., meeting HIRAM.)

HIRAM. Hullo, Abner! Be you come to the huskin'?

ABNER. (*Glancing around*) Wonder where Mrs. Crowley is—she's the gal for my money! (*Exits L.*)

(Enter SAWYER from house with photograph, which he conceals when he sees LINDY.)

SAWYER. (c.) Why, Miss Putnam, is it really you? (*Shaking hands.*) Or perhaps I should say—Miss Fernborough.

LINDY. Yes, thanks to your clever discovery with the blotter.

SAWYER. All's fair in love and war, you know. By the way, have you heard from Hastings yet?

LINDY. No, and cannot for some time. His ship is not due in Liverpool till tomorrow.

ALICE. (*At tree R.C.*) Has Mr. Hastings gone abroad?

SAWYER. Yes. You know what was transversely written on the blotter, "her father's name is Lord Fernborough of Fernborough Castle, Kent, England." That was enough for Arthur; armed with that, he started for England.

LINDY. Rather flimsy evidence on which to build our hopes.

SAWYER. I admit that, but I have great faith in him and something tells me he is right.

ALICE. (*At tree*) And to think that it lies in my power to solve this mystery! (*Rising.*)

LINDY. In your power, Alice—what are you saying? (*Crossing to ALICE.*) Did Mrs. Putnam just now tell you something?

SAWYER. (r.) Mrs. Putnam? Has she been here?

LINDY. Yes, she just left here.

SAWYER. I see it all; she has repented of her con-

duct, but her pride would not allow her to humble herself before the girl she had wronged, and so she confided in Miss Pettengill.

ALICE. Oh, if she only had! But she has placed on me an injunction that makes me miserable. She gave me a letter, and exacted from me a promise to destroy it within twenty-four hours after her death. And from what she hinted afterward, I feel sure it relates to Lindy's birth and parentage. (*Rising, coming forward L.C. to SAWYER.*) Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do? (*Wrings her hands.*)

(*QUARTETTE.*)

SAWYER. (*Meeting her*) There, perhaps you are wrong in your conjecture. Control yourself, Miss Pettengill; this is to be an evening of happiness, not tears. There—there! Mrs. Crowley! (*LINDY up to tree.*)

(*CHORUS Outside.*)

MRS. CROWLEY. (*Enters R.*) Did you call me, sir?

SAWYER. Yes, Miss Pettengill has just heard some bad news. Please do all you can to comfort her.

MRS. CROWLEY. (*Helping ALICE*) Oh! Come into the house, darling, and I'll make a good, strong cup of tay to settle your nerves. Come, darling, come. (*Exits with ALICE in house R.*)

SAWYER. (*Looking after ALICE, and following to side of porch*) Poor girl. 'Twas cowardly in that old woman to drag her into this.

(*LINDY leaning against tree L.C Faint chorus of mixed voices heard in distance. Some old-fashioned rollicking song. Lights are green by this time. Enter ZEKE and HULDY c.*)

ZEKE. Here they come! Why, good evenin',

Miss Putnam. I'm glad you've done me the honor to come.

(Enter HIRAM c. and ABNER l.)

LINDY. (*Shaking hands with ZEKE*) Why, Zekiel, I am honored by being invited. Huldy—(*Kisses her*)—how well—and happy you look! (HULDY and LINDY remain at tree c.)

ZEKE. (Down l.) Come, Hi, you must help me light up. Hullo, Abner!

ABNER. Hullo, Zekiel. (*About to sit on HIRAM's sign*. ZEKE exits in outbuilding l.)

HIRAM. Look out! (ABNER jumps.) You come nigh bein' marked for life. (*Picks up sign, looks about and places it on box in front of chicken coop l.*)

ABNER. Say, Hiram, where's Mrs. Crowley?

(Enter MRS. CROWLEY, MANDY and DEACON from house r.)

MRS. CROWLEY. Here they come!

HIRAM. (To ABNER) There's your Irish Angel now. (Exit in shed l.)

(ABNER goes to MRS. CROWLEY c. MANDY and DEACON go to gate.)

MRS. CROWLEY. (*Taking ABNER's hand*) Ah, there, me little huckleberry! (*Swings him almost off his feet.*) I was afraid you wasn't comin'.

ABNER. You don't ketch me stayin' away from a huskin' or any other place where the gals are.

MRS. CROWLEY. Now see here, Abner. I'll kape me eye on you and, mind you, don't get too gay with the girls. (*He chuckles her under chin.*)

(*The singing grows louder and the crowd enters through gate, the men carrying lighted lanterns. They are in pairs, BOB WOOD, and others, all with girls. General shout of welcome, then a hubbub of voices in greeting. ZEKE enters. MANDY is about to sit on HIRAM's sign L.*)

HIRAM. (SAWYER R., STROUT L.) Look out!

MANDY. (*Jumping up*) Heavens to Betsey! What is it—a snake?

HIRAM. (*Holding up sign*) No; but you came nigh sittin' on that. (*Several people laugh.*) Where in thunder can I put that so's it won't git sot on?

ZEKE. Take it out back of the barn, Hiram, and put it on the stone wall side of the pig pen.

HIRAM. All right; I guess nobody'll sit on it there, unless it's the pigs. (*Exit HIRAM with sign L.2E.*)

(*More general conversation. ABNER and MRS. CROWLEY try to get a secluded spot, but are constantly being interrupted. HIRAM returns. The girls gradually drift over R. around SAWYER. The men L. around STROUT.*)

STROUT. Jest look at that crowd of girls around that city chap! Wouldn't that make you sick?

ZEKE. Never mind, Professor; he's a novelty to 'em, that's all.

STROUT. Well, he seems to last over his nine days.

ZEKE. He certainly does wear well.

BOB. Come, professor, a speech before we begin huskin'.

OTHER MEN. Yes, yes—a speech, a speech! (*They half lift STROUT up on stump or wall L.*)

STROUT. Ladies and gentlemen! (*Laugh from the girls at what SAWYER has been saying. Dis-*

gusted) I say—ladies and gentlemen! (Another laugh and buzz of conversation from girls R. Indignantly) Gentlemen! without the ladies— (Louder laugh than before. STROUT keeps on saying "We are gathered here—" but is drowned out by cries from girls of "Yes, Mr. Sawyer. Please say something! A speech! A speech!" and so on.)

(SAWYER remonstrates, but is finally forced up on steps of house R. During his speech the men gradually leave STROUT until he has nobody listening. He is disgusted. Gets down, sits on box L.I., with DEACON near him. As SAWYER is forced on house steps all shout, "A speech! A speech!")

MRS. CROWLEY. Spach! Spach! (General laugh.)

SAWYER. (On steps) Really, ladies and gentlemen, you force me into an embarrassing position—
OMNES. Oh, no! Oh, no!

SAWYER. Like yourselves, I am only an invited guest. But if Mr. Pettengill will allow me to speak for him—

ZEKE. Certainly. Go ahead! Go ahead!

STROUT. Oh, yes. Go ahead.

SAWYER. I think I echo his sentiments when I thank you in his name for your hearty demonstration of friendship and good-will. That you are welcome goes without saying and that we will pass a pleasant evening is a foregone conclusion. (Applause.)

DEACON. Did you hear that, Obadiah?

STROUT. (Savagely) Yes, I heard it.

SAWYER. As for myself, this is my first experience at a husking party.

MRS. CROWLEY. Huroo for Mr. Sawyer! (All laugh.)

SAWYER. I know that ignorance of the law is no excuse, but if I commit any grievous error, I throw myself upon your mercy and hope for the minimum sentence. (*Applause.*)

BOB. (c. to HIRAM R.C.) What's the matter with Strout? He didn't finish his speech.

HIRAM. Guess he had a severe attack of the Quincy.

DEACON. Well, let's git to work; business before pleasure.

(General buzz of conversation. They enter barn and prepare for husking. The important characters are near the entrance of barn, in plain sight of audience, the unimportant ones in the rear. ALICE and SAWYER sit together. ABNER and MRS. CROWLEY remain down stage L.)

ABNER. Say, Mis' Crowley, I've got to go back o' the barn to tend to Miss Putnam's horse. If you kin kind o' sneak away from the others an' meet me out there, I've got suthin' I'd like to say to you.

MRS. CROWLEY. Sh! Don't say a word. I'll manage it. They'll niver miss us.

(ABNER sneaks off L.2E. MRS. CROWLEY sneaks off above the barn, L. HIRAM, ZEKE and DEACON have supplied all with stools, boxes, etc., and the husking begins.)

STROUT. (On steps of cottage R.) Now, fellers, keep your eyes on the gals an' see that they don't hide any red ears.

HIRAM. I move that every feller keeps his eye on the p'tickler gal.

BOB. (c.) We all know who you'll watch, Hiram.

HIRAM. Well, I ain't ashamed on it.

MANDY. (Above him) Well, you needn't watch me so close that you won't do any work!

HIRAM. How'd you know they meant you?
(Several laugh.)

(Enter SAMANTHY through gate R.C. She is met by DEACON, who takes her around tree and points over to seat.)

ZEKE. Hullo, S'manthy, you're jest in time.

SAMANTHY. I wuz afraid I'd be late. (Enters barn.)

ZEKE. Set right down here. (She goes in back.)

(SAWYER gets red ear.)

MANDY. Ah! Mr. Sawyer's got a red ear!
(General laugh and shout.)

DEACON. The fust thing.

SAWYER. Well, what's the penalty?

DEACON. Just as though you didn't know.

HIRAM. (L.) You've got to kiss all the gals in sight. (General laugh and shout.)

DEACON. That's right.

SAWYER. I'll work that sentence out in full. (He begins to kiss the girls. Some are willing, some diffident and shy.)

STROUT. That feller's got the darndest luck I ever saw. (SAWYER appears again kissing the girls.)

SAWYER. Let me see, have I completed the circuit?

ZEKE. All but Alice. (Absolute silence.)

SAWYER. Miss Pettengill, this is rather an unfair advantage.

ALICE. (On seat at tree, rising) Not at all, Mr. Sawyer; I have voluntarily placed myself on the firing line. (SAWYER reverently kisses ALICE on forehead.)

HIRAM. (Who has been counting) Where's that Irish angel?

BOB. That's so, where's Mrs. Crowley?

OMNES. Where's Mrs. Crowley? (*General hunt for her and return.*)

MANDY. You'd better look for Abner Stiles; I guess you won't find her far off. Mr. Strout, did you hide a red ear then?

STROUT. No, Miss Skinner. I'm not as lucky as some people. (*Looks at SAWYER.*)

HIRAM. No; he hasn't got a red ear, he's got a red nose. (*Laugh.*)

STROUT. (*Rising indignantly*) Look here, I didn't come here to be insulted.

DEACON. (*On steps of cottage, reprovingly*) Hiram! Hiram! Be careful!

HIRAM. (*Down R. to STROUT*) Gol durn it, Professor, can't you take a joke?

STROUT. Yes, I can; but I'm no hog, an' I'd thank some of you to p'int your jokes the other way.

(SAMANTHY rushes out of barn screaming. Several of the boys chase her, crying "Stop her!" "She's got a red ear!" etc. She dodges about, laughing and yelling. Finally BOB WOOD catches her.)

BOB. Where's your red ear? Let's see it. (SAMANTHY shows white one.) Why, that's not a red ear. That's a white one.

SAMANTHY. Is it? I didn't know. I'm color blind. (*Sadly looking at white ear.*) No kiss? (BOB quickly throws arms around her and kisses her. SAMANTHY, delighted, runs upstage.)

HIRAM. (L.) I move that we have a dance after the next red ear.

BOB. I second the motion.

HIRAM. And Mandy Skinner's got it! (MANDY starts to run. Boys chase and kiss her.) Here, that's mine! It's my turn fust. (Boys prevent him

from kissing her till all others have done so. HIRAM finally catches MANDY and kisses her.) Now let her go.

(MUSIC Dance.)

(Music starts, an old-fashioned Virginia reel. MRS. CROWLEY comes sneaking on L.2E. ABNER follows her. They get in line, unseen by others. Dance begins amidst general shouts and laughter. Business ad lib. When ABNER and MRS. CROWLEY come down the middle they stop for a moment and dance step dancing. ABNER gets excited and throws off coat. They then turn and go up c. together. He has on light pants and across the seat is the word "FOR." Across her seat is the word "SALE."

CURTAIN

Second Picture:

(ABNER and MRS. CROWLEY dance close to curtain so that "FOR SALE" is continually appearing and disappearing.)

Third Call:

(As curtain reaches stage on second picture, LINDY, STROUT, SAMANTHY and BOB WOOD exit quickly R.I.E. HIRAM, MANDY, ABNER, MRS. CROWLEY, ZEKE and HULDY exit through cottage and dairy. SAWYER and ALICE off C.R., ready to return in following order:

From R.I.E.—HIRAM and MANDY.

From cottage—ZEKE and HULDY.

From R.I.E.—STROUT and SAMANTHY.

From C.R.—SAWYER and ALICE.

From R.I.E.—ABNER and MRS. CROWLEY.

ACT IV

SCENE I: An old brown one and one-half story farmhouse is set down stage in one. The windows are lighted up, imparting an air of warmth within. It is dark outside and a terrific snow-storm is raging. The audience is supposed to be in the roadway, looking at front of house.

Music continued through scene until change, and lights up.

(Enter ZEKE, R.I.E., muffled up and carrying lighted lantern.)

HIRAM. (*Outside* R.) I've got my chores to do yet.

ZEKE. Better come in and hev some supper.

HIRAM. (*Outside*) They're waitin' for me at Deacon Mason's.

ZEKE. Opened a fresh barrel of cider today.

HIRAM. (*Outside*) I'll be up bum-bye.

ZEKE. All right; Mandy'll expect you.

HIRAM. (*Outside*) I'll drop in to the store. If there's any mail for your folks, I'll bring it up.

ZEKE. All right. Better bring your snowshoes with you if it keeps on like this. (*Disappears off L. as though he were going around to the back door.*)

HIRAM. (*In distance*) All right.

(*Dark Change: The front of House is removed, showing interior and exterior. Storm still rag-*

ing outside, showing contrast to the warm interior. At change the only light first shown should be the warm red glow from the fireplace.)

SCENE II: ZEKE PETTENGILL'S sitting-room. December. Blazing wood fire R.2E. Door R.3E. Window R.F. through which is seen the snow falling fast in the darkness. Door c.E. backed by porch. Stairway leading off L.U.E. Door into kitchen L.2E. The whole interior should be warm and homelike, indicative of thrift and taste.

ALICE and DEACON discovered, seated at fire R. Supper partly ready on table L.C. HULDY superintending by putting chairs around table. ZEKIEL stamps feet outside and enters c. He has lighted lantern and is covered with snow. He puts down lantern and MANDY takes it out in kitchen. He takes off reefer and hangs it in porch, then gets bootjack and takes off boots and puts on slippers.)

ZEKE. Mrs. Crowley, bring lights.

HULDY. Still snowing, Zekiel?

ZEKE. Yes, harder than ever.

MRS. CROWLEY. (*Enters with lighted lamp*) Don't you want me to help you with the milking, Mr. Pettengill?

ZEKE. It's all done, Mrs. Crowley; all I want you to do is to hustle up that supper. I'm as hungry as a bear.

DEACON. Putty heavy fall for a starter, ain't it, Zeke? We'll have some sleddin' tomorrow if it keeps on like this.

ZEKE. Heavy enough for sleddin' now.

DEACON. (*Rising, moving chair against flat R.*) I guess I better be makin' tracks for home.

ZEKE. Well, I guess you won't. You're goin' to stay here tonight.

HULDY. Yes, Father. Why not? You know if you go out in this weather you'll be laid up with rheumatism for a month.

DEACON. Now don't you two git a-coaxin' me. Your house is full of boarders now, and I don't like to see young married folks start off with a houseful.

MRS. CROWLEY. An' all grown up, too—eh, Deacon?

ZEKE. Why, Huldy and I'd be lonesome if we were all alone; that's why I invited Lindy to come here. I thought she'd find it more homelike than at the hotel, so I asked her to make her home with us as long as she sees fit to stay.

HULDY. Besides, Mr. Sawyer thinks that no one can cook like Mrs. Crowley. (*DEACON grunts.*) You see, Father, we are so happy that we want others to witness our happiness.

MRS. CROWLEY. That Mr. Sawyer is an illegant man.

MANDY. There! Supper's ready. I'll go and call Lindy. (*Exit R.3E.*)

DEACON. Well, I'll stay for supper anyway; mebbe it'll let up bimeby.

ZEKE. Well, if you insist on going after supper, I'll hitch up an' drive you over.

MRS. CROWLEY. (*At stairs*) Mr. Sawyer! Mr. Sawyer!

SAWYER. (*Upstairs*) Hello.

MRS. CROWLEY. How's your appetite?

SAWYER. First rate!

MRS. CROWLEY. Then come down here an' bring it wid you.

ZEKE. (*With DEACON goes to ALICE*) Come, Alice, let me help you.

ALICE. No, Zekiel, I want to try it alone.

(SAWYER appears on stairs and stops.)

(PLAINTIVE Music.)

ZEKE. Oh, Alice, don't raise our hopes for nothing. Do you really think this doctor is helping you?

ALICE. (Rises; they help her to rise) I'm sure of it. I have been sitting here for a long time, trying to make up my mind whether I really saw the fire or whether it was only my imagination; but now I am sure of it. When I turn my face the bright glow disappears, and now I seem to see a white fleecy object. Is—is that the table there? (She points to table L.)

ZEKE. Yes, yes!

ALICE. Then let me try. (All remain motionless, watching her. ALICE goes slowly to table and places her hand on it.) This is it. (All clap hands with various exclamations.)

(HULDY rushes to her and kisses her. SAWYER comes down stairs. ZEKE takes his hand and presses it. DEACON buries face in hands.)
(STOP Music.)

HULDY. Alice, my dear sister!

ZEKE. Mr. Sawyer, I—I—I can't say what I feel, but you know what I mean, don't you?

SAWYER. I guess we all feel about the same. Eh, Deacon?

(MRS. CROWLEY bursts out crying, puts her apron to her eyes and exits quickly into kitchen.)

DEACON. (Blows his nose) Mrs. Crowley expresses my sentiments to a "T."

SAWYER. (Taking ALICE's hand, leading her to

(*foot of table*) Miss Pettengill, this will be a happy evening for all of us.

(*Enter MANDY, R.3E.*)

ALICE. And to you, my friend, we are indebted for it.

SAWYER. Nonsense!

(*Enter LINDY, R.3E.*)

DEACON. (R.) Don't let us crow till we git out of the woods. How well can you see, Alice? Can you tell which from t'other? (*Indicates ZEKE and himself.*)

LINDY. What do I hear? Can Alice—

HULDY. Yes, Lindy, it's true. Her sight is returning.

LINDY. (*Going to ALICE*) Oh, Alice, my dear, how glad I am!

ALICE. But it is yet so faint I almost fear it may not continue.

SAWYER. Yes, it will. Dr. Tillotson told me that once demonstrate there is life in the optic nerve and the improvement will be rapid.

ZEKE. (R.) Come, let's sit down to supper. We can all eat with light hearts. (*All sit at table. MRS. CROWLEY brings in supper.*)

SAWYER. I'm afraid I shall lose my position as amanuensis.

ALICE. But never as advisor and friend.

ZEKE. Deacon, will you ask a blessing? (*All bow heads while DEACON prays.*)

DEACON. Our Father, we thank Thee for the bounty with which Thou hast provided food to nourish our bodies. We doubly thank Thee for the blessing which Thou hast just made manifest. We ask blessings on all who are not as fortunate as we are.

We ask these blessings in Thy Holy Name. Amen.

MRS. CROWLEY. And now let yez all fall in and do justice to me cookin'. (*All begin to eat ad lib.*)

SAWYER. I think I've done that, Mrs. Crowley, ever since I've boarded here.

HULDY. Why, Mr. Sawyer, do you think your appetite has improved since you left father's house?

SAWYER. Oh, very much! I've closed up one boarding house already and forced the landlord's daughter into matrimony.

LINDY. And not content with that, you follow her here and still pursue your nefarious plot.

MRS. CROWLEY. And the villain still pursued her.

ZEKE. Mebbe you think you'll force her husband into bankruptcy, but you won't, not while you own a grocery store and sell him goods at cost.

DEACON. What're you goin' to do with that store, Mr. Sawyer?

SAWYER. Well, I'm thinking of putting in several new departments, then selling it to Mr. Strout.

MANDY. Laws! Wasn't he mad when the auctioneer knocked it down to you? I expected to see him walk right up and knock down the auctioneer.

SAWYER. Mandy, I'm looking for an enterprising young man of good address and well acquainted in these parts, to run that store for me. Do you know of such a man?

MRS. CROWLEY. I do.

SAWYER. Who is it?

MRS. CROWLEY. Abner Stiles. (*All laugh. A knock at door c.*)

ZEKE. Come in.

HIRAM. (*Enters c.*) Hullo, folkses! (*Brushes off snow, etc.*)

OMNES. Hullo, Hiram! (*Ad lib. exclamations.*)

MANDY. Well, for Heaven's sake, Hiram Maxwell, what on earth brings you out on a night like this?

HIRAM. (*Taking out letters*) Well, I saw some mail down to the store for your folks, so I thought I'd bring it up. (*Gives SAWYER a roll of music.*)

DEACON. Guess you were thinking more of female than you were of the mail.

HIRAM. 'Sides, the snow's so deep I thought Deacon Mason might need some help gittin' home.

ZEKE. Set another plate, Mandy. (*MANDY busies herself.*)

HIRAM. Oh! Here's one for you, Miss Putnam, that comes all the way from London.

LINDY. (*Rising, visibly anxious*) For me—from London? (*Takes letter.*) Oh, thank you. Will you excuse me, please?

ZEKE. Why, you haven't eaten anything yet.

LINDY. (*Excited*) Oh, yes, I've had a-plenty, thank you. The fact is—this letter is very important, and I am anxious to know what it contains. (*Exits R.3E.*)

HIRAM. Don't set a place for me, Mandy; I'll set right here where Miss Putnam sot. I don't know's I can eat much, though. I jest hed one supper.

MANDY. Well, you're pretty powerful on vittles 'n' I guess an extra supper on this cold night won't do you no harm.

MRS. CROWLEY. Loosen your belt, Hiram, an' go for it. (*Giving him an extra helping.*)

HIRAM. (*Letting out belt*) Well, I'll let her out a couple o' holes an' do my best.

MANDY. I've heerd Mis' Green say that your father would eat six mutton chops for breakfast, four potatoes, eight slices of bread, four cups of coffee, then git up and say he couldn't stop to eat no more cuz he was in such a hurry to git to work. (*All laugh.*)

(*HIRAM eats voraciously, with frequent interruptions when others pass him the different eat-*

ables, saying, "Thanks" to each. Finally they all stop and watch him. Bus. ad lib. SAWYER occasionally looks at parlor door.)

HIRAM. Well, that agrees with what I heerd about your father. And what beats me is—how under heavens he managed to raise up a family of ten children and feed and clothe them all.

MANDY. Well, father was a good pervider, and none of us ever went hungry to bed.

HIRAM. That's cuz he lambasted you so much. He said he could allus lay it on harder with a clear conscience if he knew your stomachs were full.

ZEKE. (*Rising*) Well, Hiram, you keep right on an' try an' break your own record. I've got my chores to do an' lock up for the night.

MRS. CROWLEY. (*Rising*) Yis, an' I've got bread to mix, so don't mind me. (*Exits L.2E.*)

SAWYER. (*Rising*) And if you'll excuse me I'll look over the mail you brought. (*Goes r. to fire and opens letters. Looks at parlor door.*)

HIRAM. (*Don't speak until DEACON lifts ALICE from chair*) Oh, don't wait for me, any of you. I ain't afraid to be left alone.

(All rise but HIRAM. General conversation. ZEKE goes into kitchen. MANDY clears away the dishes, assisted by HULDY. All this business ad lib. DEACON assists ALICE out R.3E. MRS. CROWLEY and MANDY move table quickly away from HIRAM. When laugh is ended, MANDY speaks.)

MANDY. Hiram Maxwell, I b'lieve you'll eat till you bust.

HIRAM. Well, I won't bust, if you keep takin' the things away.

MANDY. Well, I think I'm doin' an act of charity. (*Exits L.*)

SAWYER. (*Fireplace*) Well, Hiram, did you get enough to eat?

HIRAM. (*Raising up his left hand, filled with doughnuts*) Oh, I dunno.

SAWYER. (*Laughing at letter*) Well, well, that's rich!

HIRAM. (*Aside*) Guess he must have struck the Louisiana Lottery. (*SAWYER laughs loudly.*) I'm glad he isn't goin' to tell me the joke. I might choke to death while I'm eatin'.

SAWYER. (*Coming to fireplace and sitting*) Hiram!

HIRAM. (*Choking*) Yes, sir!

SAWYER. You think a good deal of Miss Mandy Skinner, don't you?

HIRAM. Well, I guess it's an open secret 'bout town that I'd marry her quicker'n lightning if she'd hev me.

SAWYER. Well, why won't she have you?

HIRAM. That's easy to answer. My income is ten dollars a month and found.

SAWYER. Do you think if you had that grocery store you could make a success of it?

HIRAM. Could I? Why, I know every man, woman, child, hoss an' dog in this town, an' there ain't one of 'em that's got anything ag'in' me that I knows of.

SAWYER. Supposing I took you into partnership to run that grocery store, do you think Mandy would consent to become Mrs. Hiram Maxwell?

HIRAM. Well, I think she'd have to hustle for a good reason to refuse me.

SAWYER. Well, supposing you ask her.

HIRAM. I will, an' I'll do it now. (*Starts for door of kitchen. Pauses.*)

SAWYER. (*Rising*) Perhaps I can assist you.
(Calls) Mandy!

HIRAM. (*Agitated*) No, no; I kinder think that little matter had better be settled between the two on us, without callin' in a lawyer. (*Enter MANDY L.*)

MANDY. Did you call me, Mr. Sawyer?

SAWYER. Yes, Hiram has something very important to say to you.

MANDY. What is it?

HIRAM. I wanted to ask you if—if—you wanted me—to—to—wipe the dishes for you?

MANDY. Yes, I do. It's about time you made yourself useful. Come out in the kitchen an' I'll git you an apron. (*Exits L.*)

HIRAM. I don't believe I kin do it, arter all.

SAWYER. I'll tell you what to do, Hiram. Let me put it in legal form. Then you can serve the papers on her.

HIRAM. Gosh! That would be great!

SAWYER. I'll draft it at once. (*Sits at small table and writes.*)

MANDY. (*Outside*) Are you comin' to wipe these dishes?

HIRAM. Yes. Make it good and strong so it will hold water. (*Exits.*)

(*While SAWYER is writing, enter ABNER through gate outside L. He goes cautiously to kitchen window, tries to peek in. Taps on pane. MRS. CROWLEY raises curtain inside, looks out, sees face and starts. Then opens door. ABNER enters. They are seen through window kissing. MRS. CROWLEY quickly pulls down curtain. Enter ALICE R.3E. She proceeds very carefully to fireplace R. and sits in easy chair. SAWYER turns and sees her.*)

SAWYER. Miss Pettengill, did you come here alone?

ALICE. All alone, Mr. Sawyer.

SAWYER. But you must be very careful, lest you overestimate your powers and have some accident.

ALICE. I shall be very careful, Mr. Sawyer. I have been counting my photographs. (SAWYER is agitated.) Did you notice how many were left the day you mailed one to Emma Farnum?

SAWYER. How many should there have been?

ALICE. I told you at that time that there should have been six.

SAWYER. That's right, there were.

ALICE. I have since reckoned it seven. We sent one to Emma, that would leave six; but I can find only five.

SAWYER. (*Taking one from his pocket*) Murder will out. Miss Pettengill, the only theft I ever committed was that extra photograph. May I hope for clemency?

ALICE. Oh, I'm so sorry I ever spoke of it!

SAWYER. Then I may keep it?

ALICE. Certainly.

SAWYER. Vice is its own reward. (*Delighted; putting photo in pocket.*)

(Enter HIRAM with apron on, wiping dish.)

HIRAM. Hev you got it done, Mr. Sawyer?

SAWYER. Yes, Hiram. Here it is. (*Gives paper.*)

HIRAM. (*Reading*) "This is to certify that I, Hiram Maxwell—" Gee, that's me, ain't it?—"of Mason's Corner, in the town of Eastborough, county of Normouth and Commonwealth—" Gee, that's a whopper!—"of Massachusetts, hereby declare my intention—" Gee, that's great!—"to ask Amanda Skinner of the village, town, county

and state aforesaid, to become my lawful wedded wife."

MANDY. (*Outside*) Hiram Maxwell, where did you go with that dish?

HIRAM. Comin', Mandy. Now I feel like a sheriff. I've got the law on my side. If you hear an unusual noise, you'll know it's Mandy's habeas corpus. Yet I feel just like a constable. (*Exits pompously L.2E.*)

SAWYER. I rather think that a crisis is approaching.

ALICE. Mr. Sawyer, you are so good, always thinking of the welfare of others. How proud your sisters must be of you.

SAWYER. I'd rather have some other fellow's sister proud of me. By the way, you have a brother, haven't you? (*Loud crockery crash of dishes in the kitchen.*)

HIRAM. (*Outside*) Whee!

MRS. CROWLEY. (*Outside*) Bless you, me children, bless you!

ALICE. Why, what was that?

SAWYER. That was my grocery store falling into the hands of Hiram.

ALICE. Mr. Sawyer, I wish you would describe your appearance to me.

SAWYER. Really, Miss Pettengill, you set me a difficult task. I almost dread the day that your sight will be fully restored, for then I shall stand revealed before you in all my hideous reality.

ALICE. Now you are joking. It was a foolish question.

SAWYER. Tonight's mail brought me a new song, Miss Pettengill.

ALICE. Have you tried it yet?

SAWYER. (*Looking it over*) Not yet, but I think it is very pretty.

(*SONG Here.*)

ALICE. What is the title?

SAWYER. It is called "When I Think of You."

ALICE. Please sing it.

(SAWYER sings chorus. ALICE sings with him the last line or so.)

SAWYER. Why, you know the song?

ALICE. No, I have never seen or heard it.

SAWYER. Oh, Alice, was it the intuition of the poetess or did those words come from your heart? (Pause. Kneels; kisses her hand, etc.) Alice! (Puts arm around her.)

(Enter HIRAM—stands at door.)

HIRAM. All right, Mr. Sawyer. Mandy says it's all right.

SAWYER. (Turning quickly) Well, I thought it would be all right. I tell you, my boy—(Slapping him on back)—nothing like going about it in the proper way, Hiram. I'm as happy just now as if I were going to get married myself. Ha, ha, ha! Here! (Takes roll from pocket.) Here's ten dollars to buy a ring. (Gives him bill, then calls) Mandy!

HIRAM. Thank you, Mr. Sawyer.

SAWYER. Don't mention it, my boy.

(Enter MANDY.)

SAWYER. Here, Mandy. Take this with my blessing. (Gives her bill.)

(Enter MRS. CROWLEY from kitchen. Her hands are covered with flour as if she had been mixing bread.)

MRS. CROWLEY. What's the matter, is the house on fire?

SAWYER. No, but I am. Come here, you sprig of shamrock! (*Seizes Mrs. Crowley and dances to c. with her. She screams.* STROUT opens door in c.; is backing in when SAWYER bumps Mrs. Crowley against him. She breaks from him and rushes out to kitchen, thinking he is demented. HIRAM and MANDY follow her. SAWYER laughs loudly.)

SAWYER. Well, Mr. Strout, to what am I indebted for this visit?

STROUT. I just want a word or two with you, but no violence. (*Takes off overcoat, etc.*)

ALICE. (*Rising*) Perhaps I had better withdraw.

STROUT. It is not necessary, Miss Pettengill.
(*SONG Outside.*)

SAWYER. (*Lovingly supports her to door R.3E., filling up the time necessary for Quartette to pass. After song is finished—SAWYER R.*) Now, Mr. Strout, will you join me in a cigar?

STROUT. (L.) No, thank you.

SAWYER. Your favorite brand.

STROUT. Not with you.

SAWYER. You don't object to my smoking, thank you.

STROUT. (*Seated L.*) Mr. Sawyer, I've been informed from Washington that my appointment as postmaster has been held up at your request.

SAWYER. (*In rocking-chair R.*) Yes, that's right.

STROUT. And at our last town meetin' I was defeated for tax collector. Now I suspect as how you had a hand in that also.

SAWYER. A hand? Both feet.

STROUT. You bought Hiram Maxwell's grocery store and paid five hundred dollars more than it was worth. Now you ain't got any more use for a

grocery store than a pig has for a toothbrush, yet you bought it jest to keep it out of my hands.

SAWYER. Mr. Strout, you are a talented guesser.

STROUT. Now, what I want to know is your reason for this systematic persecution?

SAWYER. Retaliation!

STROUT. Retaliation for what? Why, what have I done?

SAWYER. Ever since I came here you have made your boasts that one or the other of us would have to leave the village. Now tonight we'll find out which one of us will change his residence.

STROUT. Oh, I guess you can't drive me out of here. I guess I can live by my music-teachin' and organ-playin' at church.

SAWYER. Yes, I've thought of that. Now what I want to know is whether you are going to work with me or against me?

STROUT. Suppose I decide to work ag'in' you?

SAWYER. In that case I'll bring two good music teachers from Boston. They will teach free of charge, and I'll pay them their salary out of my own pocket. (STROUT *winces*.) The church needs a new organ. I'll get them one, provided they get a new organist.

STROUT. (*In disgust*) Anything else?

SAWYER. Yes. Tonight's mail has brought me your war record from the Adjutant General, from which I learn that, instead of having fought so well for your country as you so grandiloquently boasted, you were merely an attendant in the hospital and never once smelt powder.

STROUT. (*Dumbfounded*) Ah, Mr. Sawyer, supposin' I switch and say I'll work with you?

SAWYER. In that case I'll withdraw my objections to your appointment as postmaster. I have given Hiram Maxwell a third interest in my grocery store. I'll give you a third. I'll furnish all the

capital—be the silent partner, and we'll do business under the firm name of Strout, Maxwell and Co.

STROUT. (*Hesitating*) Ah! What'll you do with that war record?

SAWYER. I'll burn it and no one but you and I will know that the nearest you came to becoming a military hero was in the hospital.

STROUT. (*Rising*) Mr. Sawyer, I don't think you and I will clash in the future. (*Offers hand*.)

SAWYER. (*Shaking it*) I don't think we will. (*Going to mantel over fireplace, getting box of cigars*.) And now, Mr. Strout, will you please me by having a cigar?

STROUT. (*Quickly taking one*) Certainly! (*Reaching and taking another*) Oh! Ah! This is the one I didn't take when I came in.

(ARTHUR raps outside.)

SAWYER. Come in!

(ARTHUR enters c., covered with snow.)

SAWYER and ARTHUR. (*Together*) Why, Quin! Hello, Arthur, back from London? (*General greeting*.)

SAWYER. (*Suddenly remembering STROUT*) Oh, Mr. Strout.

ARTHUR. (*Turning*) Mr. Strout? Ah—

SAWYER. Mr. Strout, you've met Mr. Hastings.

STROUT. Yes, we've met. (*Turning away*.)

SAWYER. Oh, Mr. Strout! (*SAWYER getting MR. STROUT'S coat and hat*.) Our future partner is in the kitchen.

STROUT. Well, I'll go and interview our future partner. (*Going L.*)

SAWYER. Oh! Must you go?

STROUT. Yes, I must. (*Exits into kitchen*.)

SAWYER. (*To ARTHUR*) Well, old boy, I am very glad to see you back again, but what luck?

(*Enter LINDY R.3E.*)

ARTHUR. The very worst. But where is Lindy?

LINDY. Arthur, is it really you? (*Goes to him.*)

ARTHUR. (*Embraces her*) Lindy! (*SAWYER turns his back and starts up stairs.*) How glad I am to see you! (*Sees QUINCY*) Don't go, Sawyer. I want your advice and help. (*SAWYER returns.*)

LINDY. I have just been reading your letter.

ARTHUR. It must have come on the same steamer that brought me.

LINDY. Then you met my father?

ARTHUR. I met Lord Fernborough.

SAWYER. And he would not acknowledge the relationship?

ARTHUR. No. But one can scarcely blame him, for since he lost his wife and child he has been the butt of cheats and imposters. "Bring me some proof," said he, "even the slightest, or facts on which I can base a logical sequence, and she will find in me a father whose heart is bursting to pour forth its love on his only child."

(*ALICE enters R.3E.*)

LINDY. My poor father. Oh, if we could only get that letter!

ARTHUR. What letter?

LINDY. The letter that Mrs. Putnam gave to Alice. It contains the secret of my birth.

ARTHUR. We must get that letter.

ALICE. And so we shall.

(*All turn to ALICE. LINDY rises.*)

LINDY and SAWYER. Alice!

ALICE. I have heard all. Huldy!

LINDY. You do not mean that you will break your promise?

ALICE. I will make an effort to be released from it. (*HULDY enters L.F. on stairs.*) Huldy, will you get me that envelope that contains so much? You will find it in the small drawer in my desk.

HULDY. With pleasure, Alice. (*Exits R.3E. quickly.*)

ZEKE. (*Enters L.2E.*) Why, Mr. Hastings, I'm glad to see you!

ALICE. Zekiel, I want you to go to Aunt Heppy's at once.

ZEKE. (*Going up c.*) Why, certainly, Alice. (*Gets coat, etc., preparing to go.*)

LINDY. Alice, dear, if you only knew the happiness or misery that hangs on your success!

ALICE. I do, Lindy; I realize it all. She *must* release me from my promise; she must restore to you your birthright.

(*ZEKE puts on coat, etc., near door. Knock at door.*

ZEKE opens it. SAMANTHY enters, snow covered.)

OMNES. Samanthy! (*She is crying.*)

ZEKE. Why, Samanthy, what's the matter?

SAMANTHY. Mis'—Mis'—Putnam—

OMNES. Yes, yes!

SAMANTHY. She's dead!

(*HULDY enters in time to hear this; she stops. ALICE staggers; QUINCY and DEACON catch her.*)

LINDY. (*Overcome*) Dead! Dead! Oh, my God, it is too late! (*Staggers into ARTHUR'S arms. He seats her L.*)

ARTHUR. Poor child—be brave.

ZEKE. When did she die, Samanthy?

SAMANTHY. Last night!

ALICE. Poor Aunt Heppy.

HULDY. (*Coming down*) Here is the letter, Alice.

ALICE. Give it to me. (*Takes letter*. SAWYER turns partly away, the DEACON turns to fireplace. ALICE makes quick dash to place letter in fire, is caught by SAWYER L. and DEACON R.)

SAWYER. What would you do?

ALICE. Destroy it. She is dead. I must keep my promise.

SAWYER. Wait!

ZEKE. (*Seeing envelope in SAMANTHY'S coat, takes it out*) Why, what is this?

SAMANTHY. Oh, that's a letter Mis' Putnam gave me for Alice.

ALICE. (*Quickly*) Read it, Mr. Sawyer.

HULDY. Come into the kitchen, Samanthy, and warm yourself at the fire. (*Exit L.2E. with SAMANTHY*.)

SAWYER. "My dear Alice, when you read this letter, perhaps I shall be dead; but I die repentant, and ask forgiveness of all that I have wronged. It is my dying wish that you give the letter you promised to destroy to my adopted daughter Lindy, and I hope God will forgive me for all I have made her suffer. Your loving aunt, Hepsibah Putnam."

(*STOP Music.*)

ALICE. Take it, Lindy, take it! (*She is staggering across to LINDY, L., when SAWYER takes letter and gives it to LINDY, L., who reads it eagerly. SAWYER leads ALICE to organ R.*)

HULDY. Zekiel, I'm so glad. (*ZEKE kisses her.*)

ARTHUR. Lindy, at last! (*They embrace.*)

DEACON. Our prayers have been answered. Let us give praise to Him from whom all blessings flow.

(All group around the organ with various exclamations ad lib. ALICE sits at organ to play. All lights go out. The strains of mixed voices singing "Praise God from whom," etc., are heard. When the chorus is half through the lights go up and the exterior alone is seen, as at the beginning of act, except that the storm has cleared away. The moon is shining brightly and the smoke from chimney is seen curling up through the trees. The voices are quite distant. As the white horse with old swan-shaped sleigh containing HIRAM and the DEACON is driven from the rear of cottage down through yard out through gate and turned to R., slowly descends the—)

CURTAIN

PROPERTY PLOT

ACT I

Benoni Hill's grocery store.

Ground cloth.

Grass mats to mask drop up c. at back.

Counter eight feet long, two feet, six inches wide r.

Row of shelves back of counter.

Chair below counter.

Barrel with bushel basket of onions up r.c.

Bench under counter.

Round stove down l.c.—stove pipe, etc.

Flat wooden spittoon filled with sawdust front of
stove.

Chair r. and l. of stove.

Two boxes near stove to be used as seats.

Box down l. near stove to be broken each show.

Lot of pasteboard boxes assorted sizes piled up
above door l.

Wire letter rack hung on post office up l.

Stool in post office.

Lot of groceries to fill shelves.

Canned goods to fill shelves.

Breakfast foods, soaps, etc., on shelves and counter.

Two tea cans, scoop, tea.

Two coffee cans.

One bundle of shovels.

One bundle of mops.

One bundle of brooms.

Four egg crates. (One filled with china eggs. Top
layer.)

Ten soap or cracker boxes.

Three bushel baskets. (One half peck of onions,
one half peck potatoes, one half peck of apples.)

Two nail kegs.

Lot of signs, some home-made, such as "Butter,
twenty-eight cents a pound, fresh eggs twenty-
four cents a dozen, sugar four cents a pound."

Four prop hams; several strips of bacon.

Lot of shoe boxes, or boots.

On counter:

Scales and weights. Glass jar containing one half
dozen pickles.

Box of matches.

Wrapping paper.

Ball of string in cigar box.

Lot of pasteboard boxes to be knocked off.

Small cigar show case with twelve boxes of cigars,
tobacco, etc.

One box with a sign two for five, about ten prac-
tical cigars.

On bench under counter:

Package of tea.

Side props:

Off R.U.:

Molasses jug for Mandy.

Train whistle.

Mail bag containing twelve letters, all to be stamped
and have inclosures.

Box of cigars. (Practical.)

Hand Props:

Country newspaper; stamped letter, not opened, for
Deacon.

Tuning fork or reed, for Strout.

Letter with inclosure; paper money; matches for Arthur.

Stick to whittle; jack knife for Hiram.

Paper money; cigar case for Quincy.

Apple; all day sucker for Samanthy.

ACT II

SCENE I

At the old cross-roads:

All your grass mats.

Log big enough for two to sit upon.

Side props:

Off R.:

Market basket with several bundles for Abner.

Padded horse effects.

Hand props:

Corn cob pipe for Abner.

Coins; cigars; matches for Strout.

Coin for Arthur.

ACT II

SCENE II

Mrs. Putnam's sitting room.

Ground cloth.

Rag rugs.

Curtains on window up r. Lace.

Square piano down R.

Upholstered seat at piano.

Carpet on stair up R.

Settee up R.

Mantel up c.

Armchair R. of mantel.

What-not in upper R. corner.

Desk down L. Must have drawer. (Secretary.)

Armchair at desk.

Round table c.

Large armchair L. of table.

Chair R. of table.

Pictures on walls.

Hat rack up L.C.

On piano down R.:

Scarf.

Large vase of flowers.

Two stuffed birds.

Three books.

Hand mirror.

Lot of sheets of music.

On settee up R.:

Sofa pillows.

Doilies.

On mantel up C.:

Mantel scarf.

Two candle sticks and candles.

Clock.

On what-not up C.:

Ad lib. bric-a-brac. (Shells, statuette, old china.)

On desk L.:

Stationery in rack.

Lap desk containing paper, ink well or bottle, pens
and blotter.

Two small framed photos in plush frames.

In drawer of desk:

Old letter (Brown) in envelope of same color.

*Side props:**Off L.3:*

Dust cloth.

Bible (black book) to throw.

Hand props:

Heavy cane; bunch of keys for Mrs. Putnam.

ACT III

ZEKE PETTENGILL's *barnyard*:

Ground cloth.

Grass mats.

Lot of hay scattered near barn.

Several pots of flowers around porch of house.

Bench below steps of porch R.

Circular bench around tree R.C.

Bench down L.

Bench up L.

Saddle grindstone L. almost in barn.

Three bee hives.

Board down R., three feet long, six inches wide, with
sign in black letters "For Sale".Pot of paint and brush. (Black paint, small brush
for lettering.)

Two old chairs without backs.

Two barrels.

Five soap boxes.

Three stools.

Pump up C.

One half dozen chickens.

Chicken feed scattered about at rise.

Wagon shafts.

Odds and ends of harness.

Hay rakes, etc., about barn.

*Side props:**Off R.2 in house:*

Large practical fish horn for Mrs. Crowley.
 Mug of cider for Mandy.
 Tin crash.

Off L.2 in barn:

Two pails of milk for Mrs. Crowley.
 Two pails of milk; three legged stool for Zeke.
 Big wood crash.
 Small live bull with halter and rope.
 Four lighted lanterns.
 Lot of corn; on the stalk; corn in the husks.
 Three bushel baskets filled with corn in the husks.
 Two red ears. (Planted.)
 Box or bundle of tools to sharpen on grindstone.
 Small tin pail for Samanthy.
 Three lighted lanterns. (Quartette.)

Hand props:

Note book; cabinet photo of Alice for Quincy.
 Apple for Hiram.
 Apple for Samanthy.
 Brown letter (duplicate of one used in Act II) for
 Mrs. Putnam.

ACT IV

Divided set. Interior and exterior:

Ground cloth.
 Rag medallion.
 Rag rugs.
 Mantel down R.I.
 Curtains on window up R.C.
 Curtains on kitchen window. (Roller shade.)
 Arm rocking chair at fireplace.
 Organ above door R.3 with stool.
 Small table up C.
 Hall rack up L. of door C.
 Carpet on steps up R.

Extension dining table to seat eight, L.C.
Eight dining chairs at table.

Pictures on walls. One with motto "Home Sweet Home".

Snow cloth to cover stage L. of house.

Lot of white cotton to dress windows, etc., off L. of house.

Bench and pail under kitchen window, covered with snow.

Steps to kitchen covered with snow. (Cotton.)

On mantel down R.:

Two vases.

Clock.

Box of cigars.

China match stand and matches.

On organ up R.:

Two small vases.

Plush album.

Hymn book.

Sheet of music.

On small table up C.:

Table runner.

Writing material; paper, ink, pens, etc.

On dining table:

White table cloth.

Places laid for eight; plates, cups, saucers, napkins, knives, forks, spoons.

Sugar in sugar bowl.

Cream in cream pitcher.

Dish of applesauce; spoon in same.

Large dish of doughnuts. (With holes in them.)

Plate of biscuits.

Dish of apples.

Note: Large snow bag loaded before each show
should be at least twenty-five feet long.

Works at opening of act until interior of house is ex-
posed.

Hang this in about two.

Side props:

Off R.I.:

Lighted lantern for Zeke.

Off L.2 in kitchen:

Dish of potato salad.

Sliced apples.

Dish of sliced ham bologna.

Lighted lamp.

Extra plate and napkin for Mrs. Crowley.

Apron and dish towel for Hiram.

Bowl of flour.

China crash.

Salt for characters.

Off R.U.E.:

Mail. Four stamped letters.

Roll of music, containing sheet music, "When I
Think Of You" for Hiram.

Hand props:

Paper money for Quincy.

Brown letter (duplicate of one used in Act II) for
Huldy.

ELECTRICAL PLOT

ACT I

Benoni Hill's grocery store. Afternoon.

Strong amber bunch R. and L. at back.

Amber strip over door L.I.

Amber strip over door R.I.

At rise:

Foots—red and white up full.

First border—red and white up full.

Fourth border—red and white up full.

(Stands for act.)

ACT II

SCENE I

At the old cross-roads. Morning.

Amber bunch R. and L.I.E.

At rise:

Red up full. White checked a little.

(Lights out for quick change to—)

SCENE II

Mrs. Putnam's sitting room. Morning.

Amber bunch R. and L. at back.

Amber strip over door R.3.

Amber strip over door L.3.

Old-fashioned parlor lamp on table c. Not practical.

At rise:

Foots—red and white up full.

First border—red up full, white one half.

Fourth border—red and white up full.

(Stands for scene.)

ACT III

The Pettengill house and farm yard. Early evening.

Red bunch R. and L. at back. Go to blue.

Red bunch in entrances R. and L. Go to blue.
Amber bunch in house R.

At rise:

Foots—red up full, white one half up, blue one fourth up.

All borders—red up full, white one half up, blue one fourth up.

At cue from stage manager—change slowly to red, then to blue.

When lanterns are brought in, bring foots up red and white three fourths up.

ACT IV

Exterior of house and yard. Night.
Blue bunches in all entrances L.

At rise:

Foots—blue up full.

All borders blue up full.

(Lights out for quick change.)

Flap is rolled up on house, showing interior of house.

Also exterior.

Amber strips over doors L.3 and L.C. and R.3.

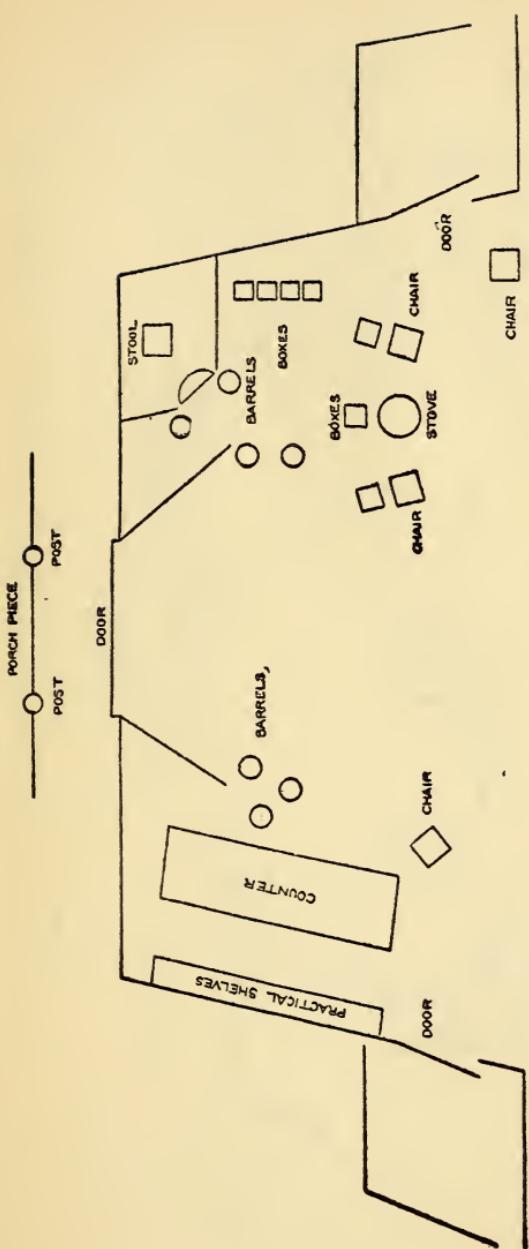
Blue bunch R.U.

Long amber and red strip over opening in house front.

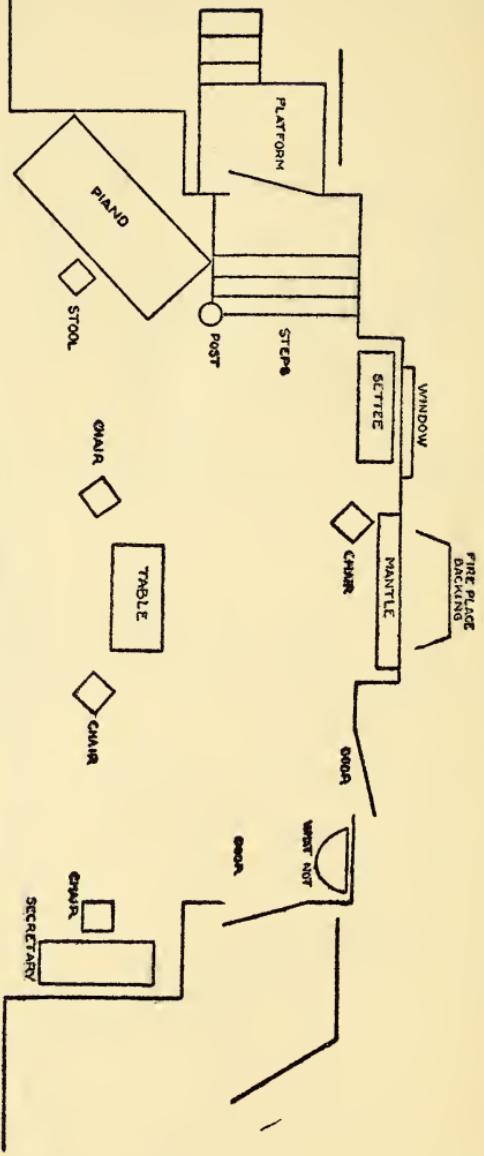
At rise:

Lamp is carried on from L.3E. Then bring lights in house up full red and white.

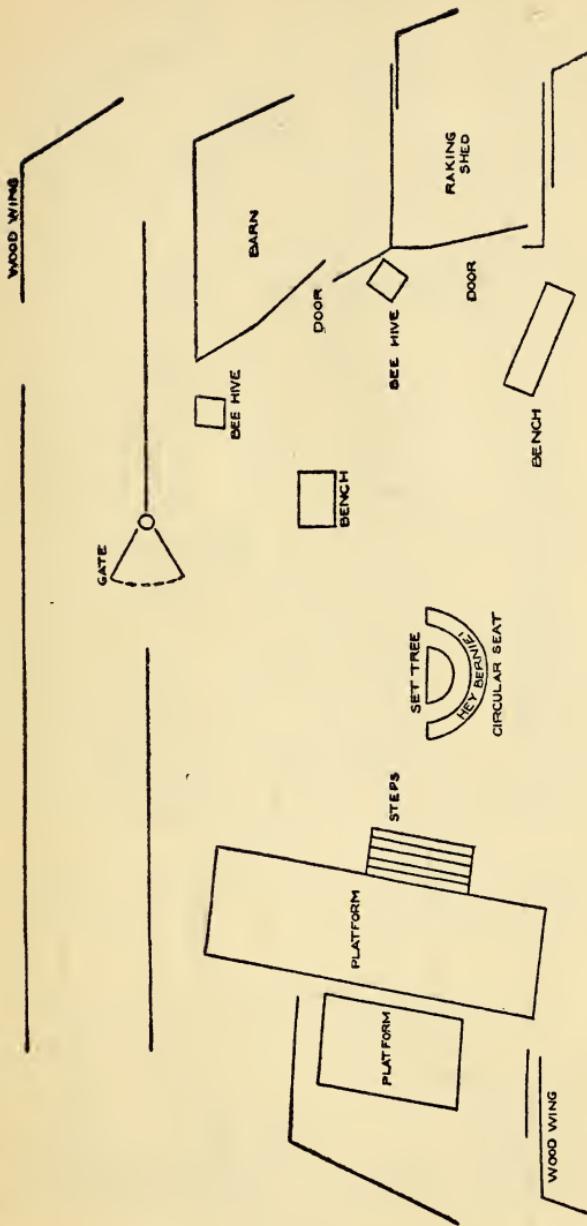
(May need strip on floor.)



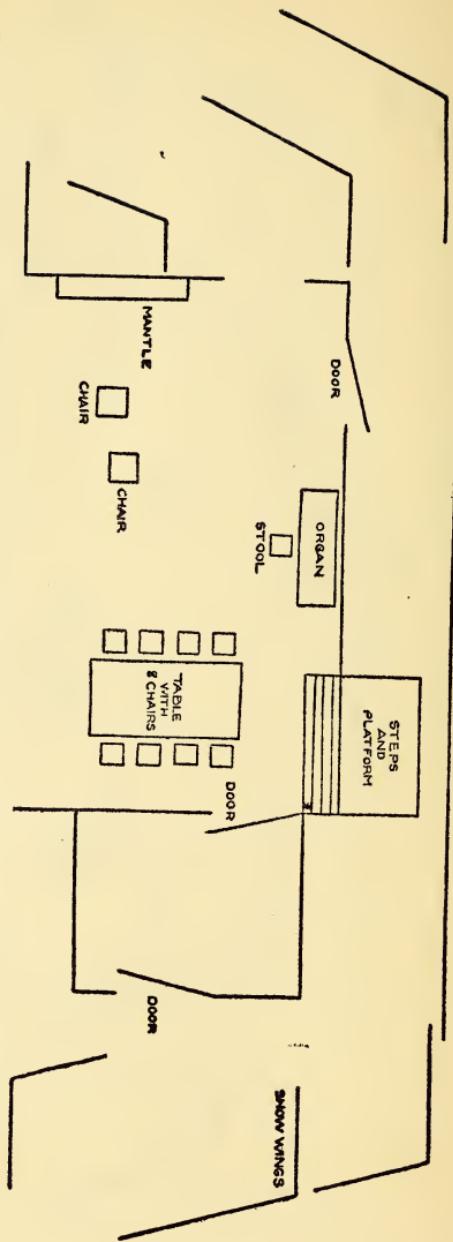
"SCENE DESIGN ACT 1
"QUINCY ADAMS SAWYER"



SCENE DESIGN - ACT²
"QUINCY ADAMS SAWYER"



SCENE DESIGN ACT³
"QUINCY ADAMS SAWYER"



SCENE DESIGN - ACT 4
"QUINCY ADAMS SAWYER"

DADDY LONG-LEGS

A charming comedy in 4 acts. By Jean Webster. The full cast calls for 6 males, 7 females and 6 orphans, but the play, by the easy doubling of some of the characters, may be played by 4 males, 4 females and 3 orphans. The orphans appear only in the first act and may be played by small girls of any age. Four easy interior scenes. Costumes modern. Plays 2½ hours.

Many readers of current fiction will recall Jean Webster's "Daddy Long-Legs." Miss Webster dramatized her story and it was presented at the Gaiety Theatre in New York, under Henry Miller's direction, with Ruth Chatterton in the principal rôle. "Daddy Long-Legs" tells the story of Judy, a pretty little drudge in a bleak New England orphanage. One day, a visiting trustee becomes interested in Judy and decides to give her a chance. She does not know the name of her benefactor, but simply calls him Daddy Long-Legs, and writes him letters brimming over with fun and affection. From the Foundling's Home she goes to a fashionable college for girls and there develops the romance that constitutes much of the play's charm. The New York *Times* reviewer, on the morning after the Broadway production, wrote the following: "If you will take your pencil and write down, one below the other, the words delightful, charming, sweet, beautiful and entertaining, and then draw a line and add them up, the answer will be 'Daddy Long-Legs.' To that result you might even add brilliant, pathetic and humorous, but the answer even then would be just what it was before—the play which Miss Jean Webster has made from her book, 'Daddy Long-Legs,' and which was presented at the Gaiety last night. To attempt to describe the simplicity and beauty of 'Daddy Long-Legs' would be like attempting to describe the first breath of Spring after an exceedingly tiresome and hard Winter." "Daddy Long-Legs" enjoyed a two-years' run in New York, and was then toured for over three years. It is now published in play form for the first time. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

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A charming comedy in 3 acts. Adapted by A. E. Thomas from the story of the same name by Alice Duer Miller. 6 males, 5 females. 3 interior scenes. Costumes, modern. Plays 2½ hours.

The story of "Come Out of the Kitchen" is written around a Virginia family of the old aristocracy, by the name of Daingerfield, who, finding themselves temporarily embarrassed, decide to rent their magnificent home to a rich Yankee. One of the conditions of the lease by the well-to-do New Englander stipulates that a competent staff of white servants should be engaged for his sojourn at the stately home. This servant question presents practically insurmountable difficulties, and one of the daughters of the family conceives the mad-cap idea that she, her sister and their two brothers shall act as the domestic staff for the wealthy Yankee. Olivia Daingerfield, who is the ringleader in the merry scheme, adopts the cognomen of Jane Allen, and elects to preside over the destinies of the kitchen. Her sister, Elizabeth, is appointed housemaid. Her elder brother, Paul, is the butler, and Charley, the youngest of the group, is appointed to the position of bootboy. When Burton Crane arrives from the North, accompanied by Mrs. Faulkner, her daughter, and Crane's attorney, Tucker, they find the staff of servants to possess so many methods of behavior out of the ordinary that amusing complications begin to arise immediately. Olivia's charm and beauty impress Crane above everything else, and the merry story continues through a maze of delightful incidents until the real identity of the heroine is finally disclosed. But not until Crane has professed his love for his charming cook, and the play ends with the brightest prospects of happiness for these two young people. "Come Out of the Kitchen," with Ruth Chatterton in the leading rôle, made a notable success on its production by Henry Miller at the Cohan Theatre, New York. It was also a great success at the Strand Theatre, London. A most ingenious and entertaining comedy, and we strongly recommend it for amateur production. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.)

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GOING SOME

Play in 4 acts. By Paul Armstrong and Rex Beach. 12 males, 4 females. 2 exteriors, 1 interior. Costumes, modern and cowboy. Plays a full evening.

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Farcie in 3 acts. By Leo Ditrichstein. 7 males, 7 females. Modern costumes. Plays 2½ hours. 1 interior.

"Are You a Mason?" is one of those delightful farces like "Charley's Aunt" that are always fresh. "A mother and a daughter," says the critic of the New York Herald, "had husbands who account for absences from the joint household on frequent evenings, falsely pretending to be Masons. The men do not know each other's duplicity, and each tells his wife of having advanced to leadership in his lodge. The older woman was so well pleased with her husband's supposed distinction in the order that she made him promise to put up the name of a visiting friend for membership. Further perplexity over the principal liar arose when a suitor for his second daughter's hand proved to be a real Mason. . . . To tell the story of the play would require volumes, its complications are so numerous. It is a house of cards. One card wrongly placed and the whole thing would collapse. But it stands, an example of remarkable ingenuity. You wonder at the end of the first act how the fun can be kept up on such a slender foundation. But it continues and grows to the last curtain." One of the most hilariously amusing farces ever written, especially suited to schools and Masonic Lodges. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

KEMPY

A delightful comedy in 3 acts. By J. C. Nugent and Elliott Nugent. 4 males, 4 females. 1 interior throughout. Costumes, modern. Plays 2½ hours.

No wonder "Kempy" has been such a tremendous hit in New York, Chicago—wherever it has played. It snaps with wit and humor of the most delightful kind. It's electric. It's small-town folk perfectly pictured. Full of types of varied sorts, each one done to a turn and served with zestful sauce. An ideal entertainment for amusement purposes. The story is about a high-falutin' daughter who in a fit of pique marries the young plumber-architect, who comes to fix the water pipes, just because he "understands" her having read her book and having sworn to marry the authoress. But in that story lies all the humor that kept the audience laughing every second of every act. Of course there are lots of ramifications, each of which bears its own brand of laughter-making potentials. But the plot and the story are not the main things. There is, for instance, the work of the company. The fun growing out of this family mixup is lively and clean. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

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